

Headwaters of Canadian Literature

Archibald MacMechan

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Head-Waters of Canadian Literature

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Head-Waters of Canadian Literature

By
Archibald MacMechan

ad maiorem patriae gloriam

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TO
SIR ANDREW MACPHAIL.

Dear Macphail,

*No small part of the pleasure I had
in writing this little book ad maiorem patriae gloriam
was in thinking I could set your name in the dedication
and sign myself*

your friend.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

Halifax, N.S.

113076



PREFACE



AS a first sketch, or *Grundriss* of Canadian Literature, this little treatise differs in several respects from all previous attempts to perform the same task.

Its chief singularity lies in treating together the Canadians who write in French and the Canadians who write in English.

It avoids the dictionary type of literary history; it narrows the definition of 'Canadian;' it suggests a new criterion for judging the success of a 'Canadian' book; it tries to establish a relationship between the growth of national, at first, provincial, self-consciousness and the production of books; and it emphasises the importance of Canadian periodicals in the different literary movements.

It lays no claim to being exhaustive and it makes no apology for omitted

CANADIAN LITERATURE

names or works. It is emphatically a sketch, an outline, not a complete history of Canadian Literature, but, the author offers it to the judgment of his compatriots in the hope that his motive in writing,—the greater glory of Canada—will atone for its faults and imperfections. The margin of error has been reduced by my old friend Professor John Squair, who was kind enough to read the proof.

A. M. M.

Contents

	PAGE
Chapter I. BESIDE THE ATLANTIC .	11
Chapter II. IN QUEBEC . . .	51
Chapter III. THE NATIONAL IMPULSE	95
Chapter IV. IN MONTREAL . . .	143
Chapter V. EAST AND WEST . . .	187
EPILOGUE	231

1. Beside the Atlantic

Head-Waters of Canadian Literature

CHAPTER I.

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC



LIKE 'home' and 'gentleman,' 'literature' is a word not to be lightly used, nor to be applied without nice discrimination. Unconscious of their impiety, traders dare to call their advertising pamphlets; politicians, their screaming campaign handbills; and professors, their stupefying endless lists of books and articles by this high and sacred name. The distinction drawn by De Quincey still holds good. All books may be divided into the 'literature of knowledge' and 'the literature of power.' Since the world began, it has been granted to some few scores or hundreds of men to put together words that live; that may justly

CANADIAN LITERATURE

be called literature, the literature of power. Of it, the two chief ingredients are imagination and harmony. The literature of power is creative; and, by universal consent, is held to be poetry in all its branches. When the literature of a nation is mentioned, the first names that come to mind are the names of great poets: Homer, Aeschylus, Virgil, Lucretius, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe. These are the glories of the nations which brought them forth.

Whether or not Canada has produced a literature in this sense is a question which has been debated long and hotly. Some say 'No!' with emphasis, and demand a Canadian Dickens, a Canadian Tennyson. Others say 'Yes,' and point to the hundreds of books which have been printed in the country since Canada was a name on the map of the world. That the question has been raised at all is a sign that the young nation has a soul, which is striving to be articulate. It is a most important question and it must receive a definite answer.

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

Canadians are in truth a prosaic people. A candid historian of the American Revolution terms them a 'tamer, less inventive people' who have never shown power of initiative like the colonists who made the United States. An Australian observer, passing through, notes that Canadians are sprung from the peasant class of Britain. There is truth in both assertions. As a race, Canadians have always been dazzled by the rapid growth of material prosperity in the Great Republic, and have been the sincere imitators of its political, educational and religious institutions. This is the result of the national youth and diffidence. It is also true that Canadians generally are descended from the working populations of the Old World, rather than from the gentry, though gentle blood is to be found in the land. They are, in the main, a forest-felling, railway-building, plowing, sowing, reaping, butter-and-cheese making people, busied with mines and fisheries and factories, intent on making their share of

CANADIAN LITERATURE

the world a place of human habitation. They are a law-abiding, church-going, school-attending, debt-paying people who, after a long hard struggle with material conditions, are beginning to prosper. As befits its peasant origins, the Dominion is half a continent staked out for a new experiment in Democracy. For a long time, it seemed as if the experiment were doomed to fail; but the earlier difficulties have been overcome and Canada is becoming a nation.

On the surface though Canada be prosaic and commonplace, there is deep down in the nation's heart a capacity for the ideal. It was for an ideal that Canada poured out blood and treasure like water in the Great War. When Canadians figure their country to themselves, they call up no cypher of population, no symbol of territory, no statistic of trade, but the image of a woman, young and fair, with the flush of sunrise on her face. When they apply for admission to the great family of nations, they do not present as credentials their wealth,

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

their cities, their harvests of a thousand million bushels, but a few printed books, some songs, a tale or two. They say to the world in effect: 'We are a people, not because we have cleared the land, built roads and cities, thriven in trade; but because we have a voice. These printed pages tell how we think and feel, what we remember and what we desire. These dead leaves speak for the masses of us who otherwise were dumb.'

Literature, then, is the voice of a people. Through its literature, the life, the soul of a people may be known. When that literature manifests the strange quality of moving the imagination to body forth the forms of things unknown and of stirring the human heart by which we live, then it deserves to be called the literature of power. And though it is vain to look for a Canadian Dickens, a Canadian Tennyson, work of this rare kind has been written in Canada, of Canada, by birthright Canadians. It is a question of degree, not of kind.

This may be merely a personal and

CANADIAN LITERATURE

private view of Canadian literature; but even if Canada be denied a literature, she must be credited with a certain amount of literary activity. That activity has been conditioned by history and geography and is plainly manifest as five separate movements identified with different parts of the country and with different periods of its growth. The first, in order of time, centres at Halifax, and the second at Quebec. The third movement has its home in Ontario; the fourth is strictly local and confined to Montreal. The fifth movement has no bounds but the frontiers of the Dominion. To trace the course of these movements is the purpose of this book.

The primacy of Nova Scotia is due to the accident of early settlement. Its new capital, Halifax, a fiat city, was built in a lull between two wars, to counterpoise Louisbourg, the French stronghold in the island of Cape Breton; and its creation was a most advantageous move in the secular game of war between France and England. From its founda-

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

tion in the mid-eighteenth century, Halifax has been a city acquainted with books and imbued with literary taste. When New France was in its last agonies under its Bigots and Vaudreuils, or drained, after the Cession but for its clergy, of its educated class, and when the rest of the present Dominion was wilderness or virgin forest, Halifax had its books and book sellers, its bookbinders and even its book auctions, its own newspapers and its own magazines. Thus Nova Scotia holds the position of primacy in the intellectual development of Canada.

It is now generally admitted by American historians that the cruel expulsion of the Loyalists from the United States after the Revolution, deprived the new country of the educated and cultured class. Confirmation of this view is found in the history of the Mayflower Province. It is precisely during the period of Loyalist immigration into Nova Scotia that the first provincial magazine flourished. In 1783, Gover-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

nor Parr wrote that there were 25,000 Loyalists in his government. Of themselves they were able to found the city of Shelburne and the city of St. John, soon destined to be the capital of a new province created by fission from Nova Scotia. In July, 1789, the year of the Rights of Man, there appeared in Halifax the first number of *The Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News*. This was a monthly magazine of eighty pages, and double columns, well printed, if with rather small type. The editor was a Loyalist who had been professor of classics in King's College, at New York; the printer was a Loyalist from Boston, young John Howe, who was to beget a famous son. The eighteenth century was the age of classical education, and the title is decorated with two learned mottoes. The first, *Orientia tempora notis Instruit exemplis*, declares the editor's purpose, while the second, *Scribentem juvat ipse favor, minuitque laborem*, hints delicately at consideration and sup-

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

port. The magazine is necessarily a compilation, as editorial preface declares; but, even so, it leaves no doubt as to the tastes of the constituency for which it caters. Literature comes first in the subtitle and first in fact. The opening article is historical, retrospective and appeals to a local patriotism, which was even then evidently strong. It is a reprint of the life of Sir William Alexander, court favorite of James I, the original grantee of Nova Scotia, taken entire from the *Biographia Britannica*.* The preface is confident that 'Everything that is connected with the history of this Province must be interesting to the peo-

*On January 19, 1779, a Halifax merchant advertised for sale the *Biographia Britannica*, 7 vols. fol. together with Collier's *Body of Divinity*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, elegantly bound, *Laws of the Province of Nova Scotia*, Littleton's *Latin and English Dictionary*, Collier's *Moral Essays*, Mrs. Glass's *Cookery*, Clerk's *Sermons*, 10 vols.; Rousseau's *Works*, French, 8 vols.; Pascal's *Letters on the Jesuits*, 3 vols.; Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Terence, Florus, Justin, 'and sundry other books too numerous to enumerate.'

CANADIAN LITERATURE

ple who inhabit it.' One feature is a long list of new books classified according to subject, and taken with due acknowledgment from *The Analytical Review*. There are extracts from du Paty and from Mr. Gibbon's new history of the Roman Empire; Collins' *Ode on Highland Superstitions* is printed in full. Much space is given to the debates in the British House of Commons. There are echoes of notable happenings in France and England; the appeal of Philippe Egalité to representatives in his bailiwicks finds a place beside the protest of Warren Hastings. Ten pages are devoted to foreign, and perhaps, a column and a half to local, news. The list of subscribers appears in the first number and contains names of families which have been prominent in the life of the city from that day to this. In a note to the second volume, the editor expresses the hope that the magazine 'may long continue an evidence of the literary taste of the Province, and a record of its prosperity and happiness.' The evidence of

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

taste is beyond dispute; but the pious wish for length of days was not granted. *The Nova Scotia Magazine* came to an end in 1791, when the Loyalist population ebbed.

For nearly a century, Nova Scotia had a new magazine for almost every fresh decade. They were all ambitious and all short lived. Two call for special remark.

The Acadian Magazine or Literary Mirror, Consisting of Original and Selected matter on Literary and Other Subjects, appeared in 1826. This was a large double-column monthly, apparently modelled on *Blackwood's* and boldly venturing upon illustrations. 'Embellishments' appear to lighten the letter-press, views of beautiful Windsor and the stately Province House, portraits of Canning and the Duke of York. Local patriotism has grown apace. This is no longer a compilation, but a magazine in the modern sense. Contributors from all parts of the province and beyond it send articles, sketches, letters, poems,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

signed generally with pseudonyms or initials. A mathematical genius submits a method of squaring the circle, with a convincing diagram, and a lively discussion follows, Pictou and Musquodoboit joining merrily in the fray. Between 1789 and 1826, when the *Acadian* began its all too brief career, a new generation had grown up, proud of their province and the things that were theirs by right of birth. In the first volume, there is a series of articles called 'Characteristics of Nova Scotia,' with Scott's proud line for motto:

This is my own, my native land.

The mental attitude dictating the articles may be further inferred from a single sentence; 'We . . . without assumed ostentation or empty arrogance must declare that Nova Scotia possesses many legitimate sources of pride.' The writer mentions with approval two poems which seem to herald a nativist literary movement. The first is *The Rising Village*, written by Oliver Gold-

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

smith, grand-nephew of his great namesake. It tells how a local Edwin jilted his Angelina, and sketches the growth of a backwoods settlement. The second, *Melville Island* was the first attempt of Joseph Howe to express his love for the natural beauty of his province, in this case for the winding fiord called the North West Arm, on the shores of which he was born. The *Acadian* was avowedly 'literary,' its title says so twice over, and soon dropped the local news, because it was all anticipated by the regular journals. It prints such rarities as a translation of one of Michael Angelo's madrigals, evidently to gratify the taste of such readers as founded the old Halifax Library and bought first editions of *Imaginary Conversations* to put in it.

To *The Acadian* succeeded *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* (1830-1832), an interesting and lively periodical, invaluable as an index to the literary preferences of by-gone Haligonians. The appeal is exclusively to the educated and the refined. Choice bits from Praed,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Scott, Macaulay, D'Israeli (the elder) are reprinted. Notice is taken of the great lights going out, *Lacon* Colton, Bentham, Cuvier, Goethe. The editor has an eye for local talent; he reviews Cooney's *History of New Brunswick*, and criticises at length the annual exhibition of the printing club. Great questions are discussed, such as a railway to connect the various colonies of British North America.

Between 1789 and 1873 ten separate magazines ran their course in Nova Scotia. That they failed is regrettable; but they served one purpose, they proved the fact of local interest in literature, of an ever growing local patriotism, an ever broadening culture. They tell of an atmosphere in which letters would flourish.

The first book printed in Nova Scotia was a volume of provincial laws compiled by John Duport, Esq., J.P., and printed by Robert Fletcher in 1766; but *Statutes At Large* belongs to Elia's catalogue of books that are no books. The

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

first original work which merits recognition in the 'literature of knowledge' is Haliburton's *Nova Scotia*, which will be discussed in its proper place with the rest of that author's output. Its significance is not slight. As far back as 1789, the editor of the first provincial magazine expressed the desire for a 'connected history of the province' and alluded to a 'hand which is amply capable of such an undertaking,' and was at that time actually engaged upon such a work. The allusion is undoubtedly to the Reverend Andrew Brown, pastor of historic St. Matthews and afterwards professor of Philosophy in Edinburgh University. He collected the materials for an extensive work but his manuscript, after its strange rescue from a destructive grocer, lies still unpublished in the British Museum. Historical writing proceeds from local, provincial, or national self-consciousness and pride. That a 'connected history' of Nova Scotia should have been demanded and projected so early and that it should have taken such

CANADIAN LITERATURE

an ambitious form as Haliburton's is additional proof of the rapid growth of a vigorous local patriotism. His work is also historically important as being the first account of any Canadian province on anything like the same scale. There again Nova Scotia holds the primacy over her sister provinces. The chief significance of Haliburton, however, is that he told the tale of the Acadians which found its *sacer vates* in Longfellow; and *Evangeline* made Nova Scotia classic ground.

Since Haliburton, the study of local history has flourished greatly. Beamish Murdoch digested the available MSS and printed materials into three portly, indispensable volumes of annals. Campbell and Hannay drew their connected histories from this source. When Howe came to power, he had a Record Commission appointed to gather up the provincial muniments, and secured a most suitable man for the task, Thomas Beamish Akins, an enthusiast in his subject, and a charming gentleman of

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

the old school possessed of private means. He collected, arranged, classified, indexed and catalogued the divers records of the province, supplementing the original documents at hand with transcripts of others in London and Paris. From these he drew his *Nova Scotia Archives* published in 1869, which Parkman used with due acknowledgments for his monumental work. The Nova Scotia Historical Society, founded in 1878, has issued some twenty volumes of its *Collections*. Thanks to Dr. Akins, every county has its history, and almost every one its printed history. Yarmouth has two histories. Patterson's history of Pictou county, Crowell's monograph on Barrington township and the Calnek-Savary history of Annapolis contain much valuable information. The various churches, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, have each their voluminous and painful chronicler. The colleges; Acadia, Dalhousie, King's, have their historians. Nor has biography, the history of individuals, been neglected. Hill

CANADIAN LITERATURE

wrote the life of Sir Brenton Halliburton, and Patterson, the life of MacGregor, the 'Seceder' missionary to Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century. MacGregor was one of the fathers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and his name is still a household word in the field of his apostolic labors. One grandson became lieutenant-governor of the province, and another, after a distinguished career at Dalhousie, filled the chair of Physics at Edinburgh University. Patterson also wrote memoirs of the missionaries Johnson and Matheson and of the martyred Gordons, who laid down their lives for the Faith in the far-off islands of the sea. Of Howe, the statesman, there are four separate 'lives,' Fenerty's interesting sketch, Longley's fuller account as a 'maker of Canada,' Principal Grant's sympathetic appreciation and his son, Professor W. L. Grant's brief but authoritative 'Chronicle,' *The Tribune of Nova Scotia*. Howe's *Letters and Speeches* are at once an autobiography and an authority of prime importance

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

for the history of the province in a most critical stage. Richey's life of the pioneer of Methodism in Nova Scotia, 'Bishop' Black, one of Wesley's trusted lieutenants, is full of interest. The *Journal* of Alleyne, the fervid New Light evangelist is a contribution to the literature of religious experience and was used by Professor William James in his Gifford Lectures.

Nova Scotia has a history; Nova Scotians write history, and some of them have made history.

The science of nature has not been neglected. Nova Scotians, being ship-builders and sailors, have made contributions to the general knowledge of the world. In the forties, Admiral Sir Edward Belcher, R.N., grandson of the first Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, published his narrative of H.M.S. *Sulphur's* voyage round the world in 1836-42. The most important book of Canadian travel, *Ocean to Ocean* was written by George Munro Grant, while minister of historic St. Matthew's in Halifax. He

CANADIAN LITERATURE

was the scribe of Sir Sanford Fleming's party which crossed the western wilderness of Canada in 1872, and revealed to Canadians the undeveloped riches of their new domain. Nova Scotia is one great plum-pudding of ores and minerals which were early studied in a scientific way. The *Acadian Geology* of Sir William Dawson is a classic in its department, and is only one of a score of similar contributions to an exact knowledge of Nature's part in making Nova Scotia. Long before Dawson's day, in 1836, Abraham Gesner, a Granville man, had written an able geology of the province, when the very science was in its infancy. Gesner is the discoverer of coal oil and of Albertite. The dons of the various little colleges have to their credit various learned works in botany, metaphysics, mathematics, criticism, and so on, *biblia a-biblia*, unread except by students. MacGregor of Dalhousie before his promotion to Edinburgh produced some fifty scientific papers which secured his admission to the Royal So-

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

ciety. The local scientific movement has drawn to a head, like the historical movement, in an organization, the Nova Scotia Institute of Science, founded in 1862, which has its own library and its own series of publications. Much literary activity must be dismissed in a single sentence such as volumes of religious controversy, of sermons, of agricultural lore, educational treatises, pamphlets without end, on all subjects.

Journalism is a subject by itself. The first newspaper published in what is now the Dominion of Canada was *The Halifax Gazette*. The first number issued on March 23, 1752, from a little office in Grafton Street, which is marked in one of Short's engravings. The activity of Howe as a journalist in *The Nova-scotian* set a standard for Canada not yet surpassed. One paper, *The Acadian Recorder*, has an uninterrupted life of more than a hundred years, mainly under the management of one family.

Of minor, not to say minor poets, there is no dearth. Almost every gen-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

eration of Haligonians has had its singers, or satirists, or occasional versers. From the first, there were those who strung Popian couplets in the newspapers. They are always faint echoes of the prevailing literary fashions; Pope, Scott, Byron, Moore, Mrs. Hemans. There is also the workingman poet, a Scot, of course, who tries to walk in the footsteps of Robert Burns. All this work tells the same tale as the magazines, the tale of strong local feeling. A rather stout anthology could be compiled of verse in praise of the provincial floral emblem, the beautiful trailing arbutus (*epigæa repens*), or Mayflower, now happily under the aegis of the law. Nova Scotian verse has generally two leading motives, edification and the celebration of places. A critic might think it impossible to poetise on such harsh names as Stewiacke or Musquodoboit, but only if he had been so unhappy as never to have seen the happy valleys watered by those enchanted streams. New Brunswick can boast of Roberts and Bliss

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

Carman, but some of their best work draws its color and life breath from the landscapes of Nova Scotia. They are well fitted to set poets rhyming, being themselves poems. Roberts' *Ave*, in the judgment of some, his finest poem, is rich in this special and peculiar charm, while Carman's *Low Tide on Grand Pré* is even fuller of Acadia's gramarye. Rand's *At Minas Basin* and Herbin's *The Marshlands* are distinguished by sincerity of feeling and often deft interpretation of a scenery to be found nowhere else in the world. Mrs. Lawson's *Frankincense and Myrrh* and Hamilton's *Feast of Ste. Anne* deserve mention. *Thistle-down*, a posthumous volume of prose and verse by A. R. Garvie, shows unusual cultivation, with his versions of Horace and Heine and appreciation of Holman Hunt, when that great artist's name was hardly known in England. Nova Scotia has also contributed to the hymnology of the Christian church. *We love the place, O God*, is taken from a *Christian Year* by the Rev. W.

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CANADIAN LITERATURE

Bullock published in Halifax in 1854; and Dr. Robert Murray is author of *From Ocean unto Ocean*, with its reminiscence of the title of Grant's travels. The Reverend Silas Rand, the missionary of the Micmacs and the translator of the Bible into their tongue, published a volume of Latin hymns.

But Nova Scotia boasts more famous names than these. Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865) was born in Windsor and educated at King's College, the oldest university in the British Dominions overseas. Williams of Kars, Inglis of Lucknow and he are the most distinguished sons of that venerable institution. He practised law in Annapolis Royal and afterwards in Halifax, where he was made a judge. He died a member of the British House of Commons and a D.C.L. of Oxford. His literary career began with the history of the province already mentioned, but his first success was his *Recollections of Nova Scotia* which ran in Howe's newspaper from September 1835 until February

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

1836. The same year, 1836, appeared in Halifax a small, neat volume entitled *The Clockmaker or The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, of Slickville*. This is the *editio princeps* and bears the imprint of Joseph Howe. The next year these papers in an obscure, provincial journal were published in London as *The Clockmaker and Sam Slick*, the smart Yankee who wins his way by 'soft sawder' and his knowledge of 'human natur' became a figure in literature. His creator, the colonial judge, became famous. Justin McCarthy tells that the sayings of Sam Slick* were once as well known as the sayings of Sam Weller. Professor Ray Palmer Baker has come upon two hundred editions of Haliburton's works.

These sketches of life in Nova Scotia

*After a Canadian force had executed a successful *ruse de guerre* against the Germans at the battle of Festubert a 'hyphenated' voice cried out peevishly next evening: 'Say, Sam Slick, no dirty tricks to-night.'—*Canada in Flanders*, 118.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

were not the first of their kind. McCulloch, the first Principal of Dalhousie, had contributed *The Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure to The Acadian Recorder* in 1823; but the judge had a pungent humor, a command of dialect, and a story-telling gift the divine could not approach. He was a shrewd observer. A Halifax gentleman travelling with him in the Windsor stage-coach has told how a fellow passenger, a buxom country-woman, was discoursing about a temperance lecturer who was to speak at a given time and place; she said 'sugar off.' From his corner in the coach, Haliburton eyed her, took out his notebook and jotted down the racy phrase. The anecdote illustrates Haliburton's method and goes far to explain the popularity of his first and most famous work. Being based on first-hand observation of actual life in a British province, his 'Recollections' had a reality, a salt and savor never attained by any of his other works. Local critics sometimes try to belittle Haliburton's achieve-

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

ment by saying that he collected stories and did not invent them. If this be true, it only shows that like Molière he took his good things where he found them.

In creating Sam Slick, Haliburton uncovered the rich mine of American humor. *The Clockmaker* is the same kind of cute Yankee as the real estate agent in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Lots in Eden, shoepeg oats, clocks in Nova Scotia, all existed like the famous razors, to sell. *Caveat emptor!* Smartness, bragging, exaggeration, dialect are features of Sam Slick. His sayings have wide currency. Many are embalmed in Bartlett as 'Americanisms;' and they were collected in a British province by a lawyer of Scottish descent.

Two other series of *The Clockmaker* sketches followed the original success. They are usually all combined in one volume. In *The Attaché* Haliburton attempted to do for England what Dickens had done for the United States in *American Notes*. Sam Slick

CANADIAN LITERATURE

visits England with satirical intent, having as much respect for the effete institutions of the old country as Jefferson Brick. He had already found many faults and failings among the Bluenoses to castigate and hold up to ridicule. In contrast to the Americans, they were lazy, lacking in enterprise and besotted with politics. The English also might naturally be expected to fall short of Sam Slick's exalted standards.

It was not as a satirist, however, that Haliburton first came before the public but as a serious historian. In 1829 there was published at Halifax *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia, in Two Volumes, Illustrated by a Map of the Province, and Several Engravings. By Thomas C. Haliburton Esq., Barrister-at-Law and member of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia.* It is a handsome work of more than 800 pages with good paper and type, and, except for the proof-reading, well printed. The motive is patriotic. On

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

the title-page appears again Scott's ringing line:

This is my own, my native land.

For this patriotic work, Haliburton received the rare honor of the Assembly's formal thanks and a grant of £500, but Howe, the publisher, was almost ruined by it.

Haliburton's *Nova Scotia*, as it is commonly called, is a curious production. Perhaps the most curious feature is the author's own declaration revealing his naïve conception of history, as dealing only with matters remote and romantic. For him the history of the province ends with the Peace of Paris in 1763. 'The uniform tranquility and repose which Nova Scotia has since enjoyed, affords us no material for an historical narrative,' he writes as a sort of colophon, and then adds inconsistently 'A Chronological Table of events connected with and illustrative of the History of Nova Scotia,' from 1763 to

CANADIAN LITERATURE

1828, which is as artless as the annals of a medieval chronicler.

When he wrote, his only models were the historians of the eighteenth century. His account of the Seven Years' War is transferred bodily from Smollett. On account of his father's illness, he was unable to read the proof: hence there are many misprints in the first volume. The relation of the second volume to the anonymous pamphlet, *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, has been long in doubt. The similarity of title is noteworthy. Some hold that the pamphlet was Haliburton's *ballon d'essai*; others that it was the work of Walter Bromley, ex-paymaster of the 23rd Foot. But even a reading of the preface should settle the question. There the anonymous author refers to himself as having been fifteen years in the country and having made several journeys into the interior. In Justin Winsor's *Critical History*, Haliburton's work is discredited, but it contains a mass of data not readily accessible elsewhere.

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

Still, *Haliburton's Nova Scotia* deserves its fame. It is the first history of a Canadian province; it is planned on an ambitious scale; and it is an eloquent witness to the strength of provincial patriotism at that early period. But its most remarkable feature is that for the first time, it told the world the story of the Expulsion of the Acadians. Inaccurate and generously *ex parte* as his statements are, they had a great influence. They inspired Catherine Williams' novel *The Neutral French*, which in turn was used by Longfellow in the composition of *Evangeline*. It was through an aunt of Haliburton's that the tale of the separated lovers, the *idée mère* of the famous poem, came to Longfellow's knowledge. His criticism of contemporary Canadian politics, *Bubbles of Canada*, shows him to be a crusted colonial Tory, who reverted naturally and easily to life in England. With Papineau and Mackenzie, and even with the moderate Reformers he had no sympathy whatever. He was capable of believing that anarchy

CANADIAN LITERATURE

in the United States was due to the lack of a state church. *The Old Judge, or Life in a Colony*, has a greater value for Canadians than *Sam Slick*; for it presents the manners and conditions of a Canadian province in its pioneer stage. It stands head and shoulders above the few other books which picture the origins of our people. Haliburton is fond of Rabelais' easy chair; and he has some fine pages of description, such as the Duke of Kent's Lodge and the desolation of Shelburne. His characteristic humor and satire abound in his sketches of Halifax society, the Governor and his little court, the climbers and the snobs.

The effigy of Joseph Howe stands in bronze on the sunny side of the Province House, where he planted the oak on the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth. The inscription on the base styles him 'Poet,' conferring a patent of nobility which some might be disposed to question. Without dispute, however, he had the poet's temperament. Proof of this in plenty will be found in his *Poems and*

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

Essays published at Montreal in 1874. There you have the best of Howe; you see his heart laid bare; you learn to know the great thoughts in whose society the man lived. The themes of his verse are the loveliness of his native province, loyalty to it and to the mother land, the primal sympathies of the home. Whatever fault the critic may find with its form, or its imitative or derivative character, the feeling it expresses is always right and sincere. His prose is much stronger. Speeches do not, as a rule, read well; but these are solid and bear close scrutiny. The Shakespeare address is inspiring and ends with a fine tribute to Queen Victoria. That on 'Eloquence' reveals the open secrets of his own success as a speaker,—simplicity, earnestness, character. The speech at the great family gathering of the Howes is a broad-minded, manly eirenicon. A British subject, he addresses an American audience at a time when their country was exacerbated with his country. He speaks wisely, nobly, with true tact,

literally proposed
to make peace

CANADIAN LITERATURE

without giving cause of offence, and yet without lowering his flag for a moment. He has sentences like this: 'A wise nation preserves its records, gathers up its muni-ments, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, repairs its great public structures and fosters national pride and love of country by perpetual references to the sacrifices and glories of the past.' Howe's renown as an orator and as a constructive statesman should not obscure his services to the cause of Canadian letters. It seems impossible that he should have had no part, in the two Halifax magazines which flourished in his youth. Howe's *Letters to Lord John Russell* reveal him as a deep political thinker, teaching a British statesman the true principles of democracy.

James De Mille (his own modification of the Dutch patronymic Demill) came of Loyalist blood on both sides of the house, and was born in the Loyalist city of St. John; but his life-work was done in Nova Scotia. From 1861 until 1864 he was Professor of Classics at

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

Acadia. Migrating to Dalhousie in the latter year, he became Professor of Rhetoric and History until his death in 1880. He was only forty-seven years of age, but he had more than a score of books to his credit, for he wielded a fluent pen. His first publication was a story of the early Christians, called *The Martyrs of the Catacombs* (1865) followed in 1867 by *Helena's Household*, a longer and better tale on the same theme. Like Haliburton's, his first success was humorous, and dealt with American character. This was *The Dodge Club* which appeared as a serial in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in 1868. It may have been suggested by his own tour in Europe in 1850-51 with his elder brother. Here he struck the vein of comic travels from the irreverent American point of view, which Mark Twain worked to such profit in the contemporaneous *Innocents Abroad*. Six of De Mille's novels were published by Harper's, one of which, *The American Baron*, was translated into French by Louis Ulbach and went

very humorous

CANADIAN LITERATURE

through several editions in that form. Appleton's published *An Open Question*, and *The Lady of the Ice*, which seems to have been adapted for the stage. He also wrote nine books for boys, the B. O. W. C. series. They are based in part on his schoolboy experiences at Horton and they are the only books of his which owe anything to the province of Nova Scotia.

No one could think more meanly of his books than their author; he called them his 'trash,' his 'pot-boilers.' They are indeed facile imitations of the prevailing literary fashions; but criticism may go too far in condemnation, and, through ignorance or malice, some of De Mille's critics have certainly gone too far. Only a gentleman and a scholar possessing something like genius could have written these light, amusing novels. There is fun, brisk succession of incident, and capital situations in these despised 'pot-boilers.' Even in the lurid *Cord and Creese*, which has enthralled many a boy, the description of the Greek play,

BESIDE THE ATLANTIC

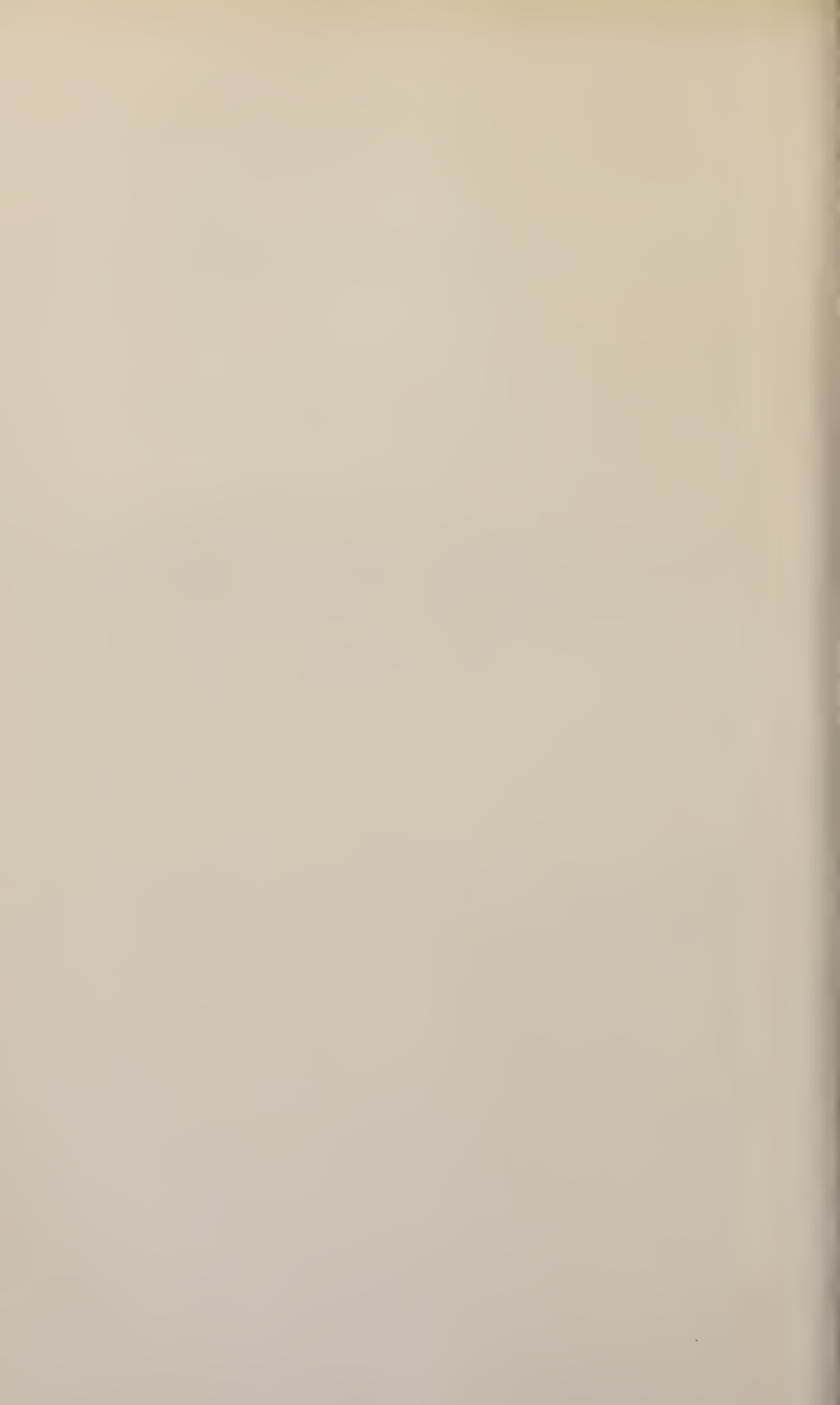
of Langhetti's music, and the scene of the lovers in the church show what he was capable of. Among the books from his library presented by the family to Dalhousie College are hymnologies of the Greek Church, a beautiful set of Euripides, works in modern Greek, Sanskrit, and Persian showing signs of use, as well as French, German and Italian classics with pencilled marginalia, all attesting the breadth of his intellectual interests. Since his death, his best book, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* has been published by Harper's. It anticipates such romances as *King Solomon's Mines*, being a tale of wild adventures in an Antarctic Topsy-turveydom where lovers fly about on tame pterodactyls, and utter unselfishness is the chief aim in life of the highly civilised (but cannibal) inhabitants. His serious work was an elaborate 'Rhetoric,' which is perhaps the best of its old-fashioned kind, and a long religious poem, *Behind the Veil*, published since his death. De Mille was a tall, hand-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

some, dark man, an excellent teacher, a good conversationalist, best in monologue, an amateur musician, an adept at caricatures and comic verses; in short, a most unusual personality.

The literary impulse which was once so strong in Nova Scotia and produced the first literary movement in Canada is by no means spent; but those who feel it belong to a more modern period and ~~were~~ *are been* subject to other than local influences. A modern instance of this impulse still at work is in *The Book of the High Romance*, by Michael Williams, a Haligonian born and bred. It is an Odyssey of the soul in search of faith, and the quest ends in the Roman communion. The first section sketches his childhood and youth in Halifax; and it contains most beautiful vignettes of life in the old garrison town and sea-port.

2. In Quebec



CHAPTER II IN QUEBEC



THE history of Canada involves the destiny of two races. They speak different languages; they practise, in the main, different religions. They do not mingle, except for the purposes of commerce and politics. They remain separate and distinct like the brown water of the Ottawa and the blue water of the St. Lawrence when their floods meet and join above the island of Montreal. Still, they are both affected by the genius of the land they live in, and by the political institutions they have framed. In spite of their unlikeness, they have also a certain likeness; and any account of the beginnings of Canadian literature must reckon with these facts. If the streams of creative impulse are different in color, French and English, still they move in the same direction and under the same conditions.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

As in the case of the first literary movement, the second had its home in the capital city of a province, and its origin in a newly aroused local patriotism. Between the Cession and the mid-nineteenth century, there was not a little literary activity in French Canada. Various newspapers and magazines were founded, ran their course and expired. This activity was not maintained by the native-born, by those whose minds were formed in and through Canada, but by Frenchmen of France, wanderers, who were denizens, not citizens, of the country. All that the various Mesplets, Jautards, Quesnels accomplished may be swiftly passed over. It is not characteristic; and is due solely to the accident of their residence in New France. An exception must be made in the case of Michel Bibaud (1782-1857), who was born at Côte des Neiges and educated at what is now the Collège de Montreal. He has the honor always due to the pioneer. As contributor to various magazines, as author of the first volume

IN QUEBEC

of verse by a 'birth-right' Canadian, and as the first French historian of Canada, his importance is not slight. His verse is largely satiric, after seventeenth century models; and he describes himself correctly as '*plus rimeur que poète.*' He satirised, in his fellow-countrymen, the natural faults of a peasant population, its avarice, envy, idleness, and ignorance. His history of Canada is not popular, because it takes the side of the English as against the French in the long constitutional struggle between the passage of the Quebec Act and the Rebellion. Much is explained by his portrait, which is not unlike Renan's. Bibaud had 'a broad, smooth mask, a supercilious air, his long hair falling carelessly about his ears; his cold eyes looking out with some disdain; his scornful lip displayed beneath a prominent nose.' It is not an attractive face but not a weak one; it is the face, one would say, of a man born to write satire and to espouse unpopular causes.

Quebec in the decade between 1860

CANADIAN LITERATURE

and 1870 is the true cradle of French literature in Canada. As in the case of Halifax, historical interest and study accompanied more purely literary activity; but the reaction of history upon literature was more direct and very much stronger. The first French school came into being through the *Histoire du Canada* of François Xavier Garneau. He was the son of a workingman and born in Quebec in 1809. Without any education beyond what he could acquire in the ordinary schools, he entered the office of a local notary at the age of sixteen, and studied French and Latin classics out of hours. Being twitted by the English clerks in the same office on the fact that the French Canadians had no history, Garneau retorted 'Our history! Very well—I will tell it. And you will see how our ancestors were vanquished, and whether such a defeat was not as glorious as victory.' He became a notary himself, saved enough money to go to England, where he studied British institutions, a proceeding which argues

IN QUEBEC

distinct originality of mind. After a visit to Paris, he became secretary to 'Beau' Viger, then diplomatic agent for the French-Canadians at London. His stay abroad lasted two years, from 1831 to 1833, and proved to be a most enlightening experience. On his return to Canada, he became an accountant in a bank, and, finally, translator to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada, an employment which afforded him the leisure necessary for the useful but unremunerative labors of the historian. His history appeared in three volumes, at intervals between 1845 and 1848. It began with the discovery of America and ended with the granting of a constitution to Canada in 1791. In 1852, Garneau published a second edition, bringing the story down to 1840, the year of the union of the Canadas, a political consummation hated and dreaded by the French, as threatening the very life of their most cherished institutions. The history has been translated into English by Andrew Bell, with notes

CANADIAN LITERATURE

and interpolations intended to correct anti-British statements and views. A very elaborate edition has been published by the historian's grandson.

Impartial history has yet to be written. Generally, a history is a *roman à thèse*. To expect impartiality in a history which began with an affront, was studied during a time of civil excitement ending in rebellion, and was written during a time of national humiliation is to expect too much of human nature. Garneau holds a brief for his own people, and he cannot be blamed for making the most of it. Clerical critics do not find his philosophy 'always very safe;' he 'sometimes allowed theories derived from French liberalism to find their way into his work—for example the principle of the absolute freedom of conscience.' Nor did he appreciate sufficiently the part played by the clergy in the drama of Canadian history. Still its merits are very great. Garneau's conception of history is far sounder than Haliburton's; and his great work is a

IN QUEBEC

consistent whole, carefully studied and put together, a contrast to the disconnected, fragmentary farrago of the Nova Scotian. The Frenchman seems born with a sense of form and proportion, and with a bent towards lucidity of expression. Garneau's great service was in revealing their past to his countrymen, and in rousing their national pride. For motto he might have taken the French equivalent of Scott's line which decorated Haliburton's title-page:—

This is my own, my native land.

Abbé Camille Roy says: 'It produced the greatest enthusiasm in the middle of the nineteenth century. The young especially were stirred as they turned the pages in which they felt the soul of their country throb. Garneau founded a school. Under his inspiration the historians and poets of the ensuing years worked.'

In the year 1860, there was a little book-shop in the rue de la Fabrique, Quebec, just opposite the old Jesuit bar-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

racks. It was kept by three brothers, Jacques, Joseph and Octave Crémazie. The third brother, Octave (1827-1879), was the genius of the family. Though a poet, he was not at all poetic in appearance. A personal friend describes him as 'dumpy, broad-shouldered, with a big bald head, a round animated face and a fringe of beard which ran from ear to ear. His eyes were little, sunken and short-sighted; and he wore spectacles.' A Quebec lady adds that he wore a brown wig, which gives the finishing touch to the little oddity. The Paris portrait shows a much more personable man, bald, dark, with the modish moustache and imperial of the time of Napoléon le Petit. This ugly little bookseller was a learned man. With equal ease he quoted Sophocles and the Ramayana, Juvenal and the Arabian or Scandinavian poets. He had even studied Sanskrit. Never was a more erudite bookseller in Canada, with the exception possibly of James De Mille.

Crémazie's bookshop, its windows

IN QUEBEC

filled with the latest volumes from Paris, was the rendezvous for the best minds in Quebec. There Garneau the historian might be seen rubbing elbows with Etienne Parent the thinker, baron Gauldrée-Boilleau, consul-general for France, shaking hands with Abbé Ferland, while Chauveau turned over the leaves of Pontmartin's *Samedis*. There Le May and Fréchette came to read their first essays; there Taché and Cauchon carried on endless arguments, and Gérin-Lajoie loitered after the closing of the legislative library. With that French instinct for concerted action, so different from English individualism, this *cénacle* established a magazine, *Les Soirées Canadiennes*, the aim of which is sufficiently indicated by the motto borrowed from Nodier, 'Let us hasten to relate the delightful tales of the people before they have forgotten them.' French Canada has a folk-lore of its own, tales of the *loup-garou* and the *chasse-galerie*. It also has folk-poetry and folk-music, a direct inheritance from Old France,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

natural advantages for the French-Canadian poet, which have not been exploited as they might be.

The coming of the French frigate *Capricieuse* to Quebec during the Crimean war was a great event for these writers. For the first time since the Conquest, the French flag was shown in French Canada. It was not the old flag of Catholic France, the golden lilies on the white field, but the new tricolor of the republic which overthrew altar and throne and worshipped the Goddess of Reason. None the less, it was the flag of France, the visible symbol of the French race, their history, their literature, and their art. The visit of the *Capricieuse* is frequently referred to; it inspired not a little verse; and it gave an impetus to the cult of Napoleon in Canada. The genius of Crémazie was awakened by it.

In 1862 Crémazie quitted Canada for ever. He had committed a commercial irregularity, which a cold world could not distinguish from forgery; and he fled to France, where he lived until 1879,

IN QUEBEC

under the name of Jules Fontaine, supporting himself by casual employment and by remittances from his brothers in Quebec. He sustained the horrors of the siege of Paris in 1870. His journal kept at the time is full of interest. By a strange irony of fate, the poet whose genius was awakened by the Crimean war, who was captivated by the Napoleonic legend, and was roused to the highest admiration by the spectacle of a mere conqueror trampling down Europe, was an eye-witness of the second Napoleon's downfall, and suffered in his own person the woes of the defeated.

Crémazie's prose is clear and forceful. His letters contain excellent criticism of the contemporary literary movement; and they are illuminated by flashes of wit distinctly French. Of a certain dabbler in verse, he writes: 'À propos de la Toussaint, j'ai eu des vers impossibles de M—. Pourquoi diable cet homme fait-il des vers? C'est si facile de n'en pas faire.'

His verse is scanty, but high in qual-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

ity. Great praise is usually bestowed upon the macabre *Promenade de Trois Morts*. It is the first of November, the feast of All Saints, that high-tide in the calendar of Quebec, which recollects the dead. Under the mould, the Dead begin to stir and take the road in a white and silent column; their flowing grave-clothes giving them the dignity of kings. Three seem to be the 'new-born of the dead.' One is an old man, whose head is blanched with the snows of sixty winters: he was taken away from his only son, the son of his old age. The second is a youth torn from his bride; the third is a son snatched from his mother. A large part is borne by the Conqueror Worm. The tone may be inferred from a single stanza.

La femme a sa beauté; le printemps a ses roses,
Qui tournent vers le ciel leurs lèvres demi-closes;
La foudre a son image où resplendit l'éclair;
Les grands bois ont leurs bruits mystérieux et
vagues;

La mer a les sanglots que lui jettent ses vagues;
L'étoile a ses rayons; mais la mort a son ver! . . .

And the dead man discourses with the

IN QUEBEC

worm, which tortures him. The poem remains a torso. *etc. unfinished.*

What distinguishes Crémazie from the Mermets and Bibauds is his enthusiastic love of the Canadian scene. Here is the new note sounded, and herein is the typical Canadian poet. He has written perhaps the finest poem on what is in truth one of the most beautiful parts of Canada, the Thousand Islands. He has a theory of their origin. When the angels carried the Garden of Eden away from earth to a higher sphere, a trail of Eden flowers marked their flight. These fell upon the bosom of the giant river, and brought forth '*les Mille Isles, le paradis du Saint Laurent.*' The first part of the poem is an expansion of the theme, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! Then would I fly away.' He wishes he were a swallow to avoid the cruel winter and visit the famous regions of the South; he passes them in review—Spain and the golden dome of Alcazar, Seville and the Giralda, the Escorial, the Alhambra, Venice, Florence, Rome, even

CANADIAN LITERATURE

the Orient, Egypt, India, Delhi, Benares. Each spot is given its brief suggestive description. In the second part, he sums up. All these lovely places can never speak to the poet's heart like the Thousand Islands; for this is his native land and this soil is hallowed by the graves of his ancestors. The verse has surprising energy.

Ni l'orgueilleuse Andalousie,
Ni les rivages de Cadix,
Ni le royaume de Murcie,
Etincelant comme un rubis,

Ni la terre des Pyramides,
Ni tous les trésors de Memphis,
Ni le Nil et ses flots rapides
Où vient se mirer Osiris,

Ne sauraient jamais me redire
Ce que me disent vos échos,
Ce que soupire cette lyre
Qui chante au milieu des roseaux.

The landscape has been illumined in the poet's eye by the Lamp of Memory. It is the history of the land which makes it so precious and so dear.

His greatest achievement is the making

IN QUEBEC

of a song which has come home to the bosoms of his countrymen, *Le Drapeau de Carillon*. Garneau was an honest man, but when he wrote, he had not access to the necessary materials. Hence he created the pathetic figure of the Canadian habitant cast off by France, and bitterly regretting the change. The facts are all the other way. Canada was well rid of the Vaudreuils who misruled, the Bigots who robbed, and the Vergors who betrayed her. Under the old régime the habitant had no privileges but fighting and paying taxes. If the British were tyrants, the historian must explain the paradox of the alien race fighting for their tyrants, instead of against them, within sixteen years of the Conquest. Crémazie follows Garneau and creates the old Canadian soldier, who, in the last days of the Seven Years' war, journeys to France in order to rouse the king and court to the value of the few 'arpents of snow' which they have lost. He fails in his mission, returns with his golden-lilied flag to Carillon, the scene of

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Montcalm's brilliant victory over Abercrombie, and there alone and despairingly he dies.

O Carillon, je te revois encore,
Non plus, hélas! comme en ces jours bénis
Où dans tes murs la trompette sonore
Pour te sauver nous avait réunis.
Je viens à toi, quand mon âme succombe
Et sent déjà son courage faiblir.
Oui près de toi, venant chercher ma tombe,
Pour mon drapeau je viens ici mourir.

The whole conception has been happily rendered in bronze by Hébert in the monument to the poet in St. Louis square, Montreal, which the piety of Fréchette brought into being. The bust of Crémazie crowns a plinth which is decorated with the laurel and the lyre. At the foot is the old soldier dying with his flag clutched to his breast. *Carillon* is a true song and goes to a haunting, pathetic air; the words and the music mourn together. It is the dirge of a lost cause. Fletcher of Saltoun was right when he rated the making of ballads higher than the making of laws in their influence upon the life of a nation. The

IN QUEBEC

English of Canada may well envy the French in the possession of Crémazie and Gérin-Lajoie.

Strict orthodoxy, morality, and devotion to Canada mark the verse of Pamphile Le May. He was born at Lotbinière in the year of the Rebellion, one of a family of fourteen. His own sons and daughters amount to the same number. For twenty-five years he was the legislative librarian: and he was made official translator at the same time as Fréchette. His first volume, *Essais poétiques*, appeared in 1865: in his laborious old age, he composed little comedies which may some day see the light. In 1870 he published his translation of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, perhaps his most significant work. A national wrong is a fruitful source of poetry. The expatriation of the Acadians from Nova Scotia offers perhaps the best theme for poetry in the history of Canada. Though the unhappy event is a century and a half old, it still provokes endless discussion, literary and historical. The French

CANADIAN LITERATURE

in Canada must always labor under a sense of grievance, just as the English would if the status of the two races were reversed. That sense of grievance leads writers like Le May and Fréchette to emphasise and exploit whatever faults the English may be guilty of in the long story of their rule. Being human, English rule is not impeccable. Affection towards it, gratitude or anything more than reluctant compliance on the part of an alien race subject to it, is not to be expected. Therefore, in French-Canadian verse and prose literature, there is always the tendency, natural enough and almost laudable, to decry all things English and exalt all things French. Crémazie, writing at the time of the Crimean war, hails the battle of the Alma as symbolic of a new understanding between French and English; but Fréchette in his *Légende d'un Peuple* is distinctly anti-English, while Le May's selection of *Evangeline* for translation is dictated as much by dislike for the English as sympathy for the Acadians. In life, the ex-

IN QUEBEC

iled Acadians received little kindness from their French compatriots. In the same vein is Abbé Casgrain's *Pèlerinage au Pays d'Évangeline*, in which Longfellow's poetic fancies are treated as historical facts.

His clerical critics praise Le May's *Gouttelettes*, a collection of 175 sonnets on biblical and religious subjects. The more worldly minded, like ab der Halden, are less impressed. Le May paints perhaps better than any one the rustic life of French Canada, its homely employments, threshing with the flail, the 'brayage' of linen, the shooting match, the simple feasts of cakes and—not ale, but Jamaica rum. He wished to be a poet of his own people, and he has succeeded. That is his chief significance. Abbé Camille Roy praises him as 'the most sympathetic poet of the school of 1860.'

In the year 1884, the news that the poems of a French-Canadian writer had been 'crowned' by the French Academy excited interest even among those Canadians who do not read French or care for

CANADIAN LITERATURE

poetry. The country had been paid a high compliment. Only such recognition from without would convince Canadians that their own work could possess real merit. The author who had been so honored was Louis Fréchette (1839-1908). Born at Levis, he was a student at Quebec when Crémazie's first poems appeared, and, though never a member of the *cénacle* in the rue de la Fabrique, he belongs to the Quebec school in virtue of his admiration for the chief poet in it. Fréchette is the avowed disciple of Crémazie; and, like his master, found his chief inspiration in the scenery and the history of Canada.

In all the portraits of Fréchette, there is the suggestion of explosive force which his career does not belie. He began as a Liberal in politics and an anti-clerical; and he made his way through the dust and heat of many personal, literary, and political controversies, with those of his own race and religion. His quarrel with William Chapman, an intensely French poet, in spite of his English name, was

IN QUEBEC

particularly bitter. Fréchette was no effeminate dreamer; he was a born fighter, as capable of defending himself with his pen as he once proved himself with his sword, *La Voix d'un Exilé* (1871) is a satire upon the politicians of Canada; and may be said to have opened his career. It certainly attracted more attention than his first volume of poems. Like so many other Canadians of the time, he found the means of a livelihood in the United States which were denied him at home. In Chicago, he started a paper, *L'Amérique*, which ran two years. In New Orleans, he fought his duel with the Prussian during the excitement of the Franco-German war. Except Howe, he is the only Canadian author put to such a test. The duel was with swords; and after Fréchette received a wound in the thigh, honor was satisfied. Recalled to Quebec in 1871 by a friendly appreciation of his talent, he practised law and took a keen interest in politics. He was the member for his native town Levis during the brief Liberal régime of

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Mackenzie. Failing of re-election in 1878 and again in 1882, he devoted himself thenceforth to literary work, except so far as his duties as clerk to the Legislative Council permitted. He was married to a sister of William Dean Howells, the American novelist and critic. One of his strongest political opinions was that Canada should form a political union with the United States. After the effervescence of youth, he became reconciled with the Church, and his poetry is as orthodox as Le May's.

In the richness, variety, and finish of his work Fréchette stands first among the Quebec school. He wrote poetry, drama, history, prose satire, and a vast, unreckoned mass of journalistic journeyman work. He also translated *A Chance Acquaintance* and *Old Creole Days* into French. Six volumes of verse, five of prose, three plays are only part of his total output.

His first volume of verse, *Mes Loisirs*, shows him the disciple of Crémazie in his zeal for the scenery of the St. Lawrence,

x Howells

x Cable

IN QUEBEC

his celebration of the ties of family, and his avoidance of the typical young poet's favorite theme, the theme of passion. Indeed this singular omission is a mark of all Canadian poets, French or English. All critics notice it. Abbé Roy remarks, 'The bearing of his muse never ceases to be irreproachable.' The verse of *Mes Loisirs* is more carefully wrought and more artistic than any that had gone before.

In 1879 appeared *Fleurs Boréales*, in the same vein. This was the volume to which the French Academy awarded a Montyon prize. It was highly complimented by the perpetual secretary, and gave Fréchette his reputation among his own people. In the same year he published *Oiseaux de Neige*, a title which, like the former, speaks of Canada. Through these works, Old France once more discovered New France: and Fréchette's literary success was followed by a personal success when he visited Paris.

Fréchette's chief work in verse is his '*Légende d'un Peuple*' (1887), which

CANADIAN LITERATURE

owes its title and not a little of its inspiration to Victor Hugo. It is a series of poems in different metres and various values dealing with the story of the French in Canada. It begins with the discovery of America and continues to the execution of Louis Riel, the last of the martyrs. In it, Fréchette aimed at being the Garneau of poetry. He too holds a brief for his own people; and cool impartiality is still less to be expected here than in the more sober pages of the historian. Indeed some portions, such as the poem on Chénier, justify the popular antithesis between truth and poetry. Fréchette was no historian and never submitted to the toilsome, patient discipline without which the student of history cannot hope to become an authority. He simply told the tale as he heard it in the bazaar, with an ample tide of patriotic feeling to bear it along. Sometimes, like his model, his verse becomes mere rhetoric; at other times it is simple, sensuous, passionate, outlining and defining each incident with unmistakable

IN QUEBEC

power. Like Crémazie he was inspired by the Crimean war and the union of the two nations in a common cause; but, generally, the English are represented as in the wrong and the French in the right. The book is a study in snow and ink, as all such patriotic works must inevitably be: for it is an apparent weakness of human nature that love of one's country only comes into relief against dislike or hatred of another country. The *Légende* is a favorite prize in the schools of French Canada, which shows its place in popular esteem.

The great merit of the *Légende* is that it presents the epic grandeur of the coming of the French as settlers and explorers of an unknown and threatening wilderness. Like D'Arcy McGee, Fréchette has celebrated the sailing of Jacques Cartier from St. Malo, and he suggests skilfully the explorers' awe of the untravelled and mysterious land.

C'était le Canada mystérieux et sombre
Sol plein d'horreur tragique et de secrets sans
nombre,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Avec ses bois épais et ses rochers géants
Emergeants tout à coup du lit des océans.
Quels êtres inconnus, quels terribles fantômes
De ces forêts sans fin hantent les vastes dômes,
Et peuplent de ces monts les repaires ombreux?

The pictures of the *Great* and the *Little Ermine* and the tiny *Merlin* confronted with the awful chasm of the Saguenay, of the first mass, of the first harvest are all in Fréchette's best style; and make him worthy of his title of national poet.

His prose must not be passed over. In *Originaux et Détraqués*, he presents twelve types of oddities such as are fostered by a restricted provincial existence: for example, the merchant who never enters a church for fear of the roof falling on his head, the eminent lawyer who is second to none in the courts and a shameless Bohemian outside, the rich, staid, educated citizen who is engaged for sixty years, without ever missing an evening walk with his betrothed, while the furniture for their housekeeping remains stored in an attic. Mr. ab der

IN QUEBEC

Halden finds great comic force in these sketches: Abbé Roy is much more moderate in tone. His other works are *Lettres à Basile, Histoire Critique des Rois de France, Letters on Education* and *Noël au Canada*.

His two plays *Montcalm* and *Papineau* treat of great names and great events in the history of Canada. The latter drama had a certain success on the Montreal stage, as has his pathetic play *Veronica*. Fréchette's dramatic essays have been criticised as having been modelled on inferior originals.

The significance of Fréchette is not slight. Perhaps his chief significance is that, like Haliburton, he was the first provincial of his blood to win the critical approval of the great literary centre, whose *imprimatur* is eagerly sought by all provincials. He is the first Frenchman to reveal Canada to the French. He is, in the next place, the national poet of the French community on the banks of the St. Lawrence, because he has given unsurpassed expression to what he fit-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

tingly calls the national legend. By virtue of its superior concentration, and its superior appeal to the memory, verse carries further than prose. Fr  chette's impassioned stanzas will always have a wider public than Garneau's more solid periods. He is national also in finding his themes at home, in the hills and woods and streams of his native province, not seeking them at the ends of the earth, or in the realm of pure fantasy, like the Montreal school. A decided asceticism marks all his work. The work of Canadian poets both French and English has caused no little surprise to such old-world critics as have given it their attention. *A priori*, they have assumed that the verse of writers in a pioneer community would correspond in rude strength, originality, even coarseness. But this is not the case. The poets of New France inherit the classical tradition, and they modelled their work on that of such masters as were available, Delille, Lamartine, Hugo; and the mark of their verse is not coarseness but over-

IN QUEBEC

refinement. They are derivative and imitative. Another reason for the general ethical tone is that Canada, Catholic and non-Catholic, still preserves the old moral standards and both communities are Puritanic in their general outlook upon life. No author has yet dared to fly in the face of Canadian conventions: and those who have followed those conventions closest have had the greatest popular success. In all these things, Fréchette is typically Canadian: he also shows himself typically French of the Quebec school in his whole-hearted worship of Napoleon.

There are other names, each with its record of distinct achievement, whose appropriate place is in a detailed literary history and not in a first sketch such as this. There is Abbé Ferland, the painstaking historian of the old régime in Canada; and Chapman of the *Feuilles d'Érable*, patriotic, religious, somewhat given to rhetoric and to literary squabbles; and Abbé Casgrain, whose *Pèlerinage au Pays d'Évangeline* tells with

CANADIAN LITERATURE

sympathy and eloquence the story of the Acadians. But two members of this *cénacle* deserve more extended notice, Gérin-Lajoie and Aubert de Gaspé.

Gérin-Lajoie's imposing name is a most valuable asset to a poet. According to Sulte, Gérin is a family name derived from Grenoble, and Lajoie is simply a sobriquet which he thought fit to adopt. The bearer of it was born at Yamachiche in 1824 and died at Ottawa in 1882. He is the author of *Jean Rivard*, a dull novel of pioneer life, and a history of the difficult period of reconstruction which followed the Rebellion and the union of the Canadas under Sydenham. What he will live by is his truly national poem, a genuine lyric, *Un Canadien errant*. The French Canadian is hard to uproot from the land he loves; but one effect of the troubles of '37 was to drive many of the habitants across the border into the United States. Political offenders were exiled to Bermuda and Tasmania. It was a tragic time, and Gérin-

IN QUEBEC

Lajoie has put the heart of it into his wailing lines.

Un Canadien errant,
Banni de ses foyers,
Parcourait, en pleurant,
Des pays étrangers.

As in the case of *Carillon*, the verses have been fitted with an appropriate air. Wherever the French Canadian goes, this song goes with him. It has been sung from the Rocky Mountains to the boulevards of Paris. The poem is simple in expression; the feeling is unforced; and the poet has struck the universal note. He sings the inexpugnable homesickness, not of the Canadian alone, but of all exiles. How cold a thing is a poem in a book which is taken down now and then from its shelf compared with such a song living in the hearts and on the lips of a whole people!

Philippe Aubert de Gaspé had a great opportunity of which he did not take full advantage. The son of an old-time seigneur, born at Quebec in 1786, he carried over into the nineteenth cen-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

tury the tradition of the *Ancien Régime*. When the Quebec school flourished, he was an old man, a link with the past; but he came under its influence, and at the age of seventy-four began his first romance, *Les Anciens Canadiens*. If he had simply written down his reminiscences, or if he had been fortunate enough to find a Boswell, the result might have been an invaluable picture of bygone manners. Unfortunately he attempted to combine his recollections with the framework of a conventional novel plot. Anyone might have invented the story of *Les Anciens Canadiens*; but de Gaspé was the living depository of precious memories which none but he possessed. Still, with all deductions made, this book is unique in Canadian literature, as representing from first-hand knowledge the life of seigneur and *censitaire* in the good old days before the Conquest. There is a precious residuum of fact and incident and point of view which, but for this record, must have perished.

IN QUEBEC

Any account of Canadian affairs must recognise the basal fact that the country is inhabited by two races which are not in harmony with each other. This antagonism is more or less pronounced, according to circumstances of actual social contact, or of commercial rivalry, or of political excitement. No good end is served by shutting one's eyes and denying that this antagonism exists. It is only just to remark also that this antagonism finds voice almost exclusively in the nativist French literature. Apparently the sundering forces—race, speech, religion—will never diminish in strength. Apparently the barriers to a good understanding between the two peoples are insurmountable. Still there has been an effort, an honest effort at reconciliation from one side; and that is, naturally, the English side.

That effort is manifest in not a few magazine articles delineating the French-Canadian with the utmost sympathy. Professor Shortt and W. MacLennan have written ably on this subject. Mr. W.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

H. Blake in his charming volume of essays *Brown Waters* has made no secret of his admiration for the many virtues of the habitant, his simplicity, his high morality, his courtesy, his hospitality, his unworldliness. A still more important service is his sympathetic translation of *Maria Chapdelaine*, Hémon's idyll of French-Canadian life. It is a translation which may take rank as an original work, being at once fruitful, picturesque and penetrating; for Blake had a mastery of both languages. Roberts has translated de Gaspé, and Fréchette's *Noël au Canada*, in order to bring these important works to the notice of Canadians who do not know French. A still more direct and earnest attempt at reconciling the two races is Mr. Byron Nicholson's book, *The French-Canadian; A Sketch of His More Prominent Characteristics*, which appeared first in Toronto in 1902. It is the result of long residence among the French; and its aim is stated frankly—'to correct misapprehensions and to remove

IN QUEBEC

prejudices.' That the book has been a popular success, widely read and widely influential, cannot be maintained; but it exists as irrefutable evidence of an Anglo-Canadian's good will toward his French compatriots. That the French appreciate his friendly intentions is shown by the fact that it has achieved the rare distinction of being translated into French. It remains to be seen if any French Canadian will take his revenge by making a similar study of the Ontario farmer for the enlightenment of his fellow-countrymen. If it takes two to make a quarrel, it also takes two to form a friendship. The French are too chivalrous by nature to accept compliments without essaying to return them. And when were they worsted in an exchange of courtesies?

A far more potent force was the poetry of William Henry Drummond. Although born at Currawn House, county Leitrim, in 1854, the son of an officer in the Royal Irish Constabulary, he came to Canada as a child of nine, and

CANADIAN LITERATURE

he was formed by Canadian institutions. The most distinguished alumnus of Bishop's College, Lennoxville, he took his medical degree in 1884; and, for twenty years, he practised his profession in the city of Montreal. His untimely death at Cobalt in 1907 was felt as a national calamity. Of Drummond himself it is almost impossible to write in moderate terms. Great-hearted, brotherly, frank, with the physician's tolerance of human weakness, he was a man universally beloved. His profession set him in the commercial metropolis of Canada where French and English meet, but do not mingle, and where they have clashed in bloody conflict. His love of sport took him afield and brought him into close contact with the French cultivator of the soil and all his primitive virtues. He became the first and best interpreter of the French-Canadian. His first volume, *The Habitant* (1897), was a rally of fugitive rhymes, some of which were already widely known. It was published in New York; and leapt at

IN QUEBEC

once into popularity. Drummond was the first Canadian poet to be widely read outside of Canada or, for that matter, within Canada. Over one hundred thousand copies of his works have been sold—an astonishing fact; and, as in the case of Haliburton and Fréchette, the acclaim of the critics abroad gave the admirers of the poet at home confidence in their own favorable judgment. Canadian criticism is apt to be both indiscriminate and self-distrustful, and leans upon the decisions of London, Paris, or New York.

Drummond's originality is not yet appreciated at its full value. By virtue of his affectionate insight, he discovered an ancient classical ideal living and real in the midst of a modern, tawdry, feverish commercial civilisation. It is the ideal of the simple husbandman, frugal, laborious, pious, unambitious, living content in his poverty remote from the busy, troubled world. It was dear to the Roman imagination. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Claudian have all expressed the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

sentiments so admirably summed up in Pope's praise of the quiet life.

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

This poem paints feature by feature the typical habitant as represented in the title poem of Drummond's first volume; but Drummond did not go to Pope or the classics for his model; he found him on his paternal acres throughout the length and breadth of Quebec. Equally original was the poet in the medium of expression which he chose. French was barred; literary English would be unnatural. He therefore selected a language between the two, a *lingua franca*, which he employed with the greatest tact. The French were suspicious of ridicule or caricature, to the very end; even Fréchette's skilful introduction did not entirely disarm them. But Drummond's intent was so transparently honest that even those who were most doubtful could not hold out against him. His

IN QUEBEC

own declaration was manifestly sincere: 'Having lived, practically all my life, side by side with the French-Canadian people, I have grown to admire and love them.' He adds that he thought the best way to bring the habitant before the English-speaking public was to let him tell his own story in his own way, as he would to auditors not conversant with the French tongue. He does allow his types to tell their stories in their own way; and that constitutes the triumph of the artist. A dialect always carries the suggestion of the comic in its very form, being a departure from the literary language, and therefore a degradation: but Drummond succeeds to a marvel in avoiding the least approach to ridicule or contempt of his characters. He loves them and he makes them lovable. They live in the sunshiny atmosphere of his kindly humor; and are neither sentimental nor grotesque.

What marks Drummond off from the rest of Canadian writers of verse are his human interest and his humor. Our

CANADIAN LITERATURE

poets sing of the landscape; Drummond, of men and women. Nature-worship is a pure cult, but its devotees are few. Mating, babyhood, old age, on the other hand, are themes that touch the universal human heart. As Chesterton says: 'In everyone there is a certain thing that loves babies, that fears death, that likes sunlight.' That thing enjoys Drummond. The joy which the advent of the first-born brings to the home is finely imagined in *Dieudonné*. It is springtime and the country quiet broods over the farmhouse. The curious robin comes

peekin' t'roo de door
For learn about de nice t'ing's come to us—
An' w'en he see de baby lyin' dere upon de bed
Lak leetle Son of Mary on de ole tam long
ago—
Wit' de sunshine an' de shadder makin' ring
aroun' hees head,
No wonder M'sieu Robin wissle low.

Babies bulk large in the doctor's philosophy; and form the kernel of many of his poems. His gentle humor saves him from excess and from sentimentality.

IN QUEBEC

Most of our poets distrust humor and rarely venture upon it. They array themselves in their singing robes and set a garland on their heads before they venture to sing. Drummond has a ready eye for the unending incongruity of life. His laugh is never cynical or unkind. The only poem known to the mass of Canadians, as *How We Beat the Favorite*, is known to the mass of Australians, is *The Wreck of Julie Plante*, which is mere burlesque.

On wan dark night on Lac St. Pierre
De win' she blow, blow, blow,
An' de crew of de wood scow *Julie Plante*
Got scar't an' run below—
For de win' she blow lak hurricane
Bimeby she blow some more,
An' de scow bus' up on Lac St. Pierre
Wan arpent from de shore.

In all his poetic sketches, humor blends with sentiment. Perhaps the best example of his power in this vein is *Johnnie Courteau*. The Orson of the lumber-camps is tamed by marriage and the advent of the baby, Drummond's chief heroine. Once the terror of the village,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

he creeps into the house on tiptoe at the bidding of his little wife, for fear of waking the baby.

Drummond's poetic activity comes long after the Quebec school in point of time; but he is linked with it by his friendship with Fréchette, as well as by the French poet's cordial endorsation of the English poet's effort 'to confirm the *entente* which is the psychical basis of Confederation, to bridge with a tear, or a smile, or the two in one, the slowly narrowing racial antitheses.'

3. The National Impulse

CHAPTER III

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE



THE central event in the history of Canada is Confederation. Before 1867, there was no Canada, only a chaos of provinces out of which a country might be created. British North America was merely a geographical expression. There was no common country to which Crémazie and Haliburton owed allegiance except Great Britain. To the world, a Canadian was a native Frenchman speaking broken English, as in the stories of R. M. Bal-lantyne, a connotation only changed by the Great War. A whole generation had to be born and grow up in the new conditions before a national literature was possible. The new generation knew nothing of separate provinces, but only

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Canada. To it the fierce political struggles, which the union was to cure, were old, unhappy, far-off things; and the new-built national fabric was made with the mountains, and as imperishable. The scene shifts from the banks of the St. Lawrence to the province of Ontario, that rich, heart-shaped peninsula moated about by three freshwater seas, which even in the time of the red man was a wealthy land. Recently settled and newly organised, its origin was most romantic,—loyalty to a lost cause; for those men and women who left the new Republic to live in the wilderness under the old flag founded the province, and they builded better than they knew. Ontario is a homogeneous English province side by side with a homogeneous French province. Its rapid material development soon gave it the leadership of the new Dominion; and it became the home, the centre, the fertile breeding-ground of the new national sentiment. In the provincial capital, one may see on the nation's birthday,

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

a hundred thousand people wearing the green maple leaf, the national emblem, in spontaneous festival. In the organisation of the vast prairies beyond the Great Lakes into separate states, the influence of Ontario has been paramount. The settlers from the Banner Province carried with them their institutions, and their ideals of law, education, political allegiance and religion. On these ideals the Canadian West was based broad and firm. The United Empire Loyalist leaven is leavening the whole lump.

Compared with New France and Nova Scotia which are among the first names to find a place on the map of America, Ontario is very young. Its beginnings were small; its spring was frost-bitten; it never began to grow strong until the era of railway development in the mid-nineteenth century. Reciprocity and war-prices helped to make it prosper. Confederation marks the end of an old era and the beginning of a new in matters political. The same is true of matters literary. Only after Confederation are

CANADIAN LITERATURE

the writers of Ontario distinctively Canadian.

Its literary development shows a fair parallel to Quebec's. The first books of history, travel, verse, prose fiction are written by immigrants from the old world. Such books are 'Canadian' solely by accident of the author's residence in the country. The same is true of the earliest journalism in the country. Even when they write upon local themes, even when their work takes color from the local life and local scenery, these denizens cannot be classified as Canadian writers. Mrs. Moodie's is a typical case. Her *Roughing It In The Bush* is a classic; and yet the author owes nothing to Canada but the hard experience of which she made her book. As Quebec had her Mermets, Mesplets and Jautards, so Ontario had her Heriots, McLachlans and D'Arcy McGees, writers of English, Scottish and Irish provenance. Their education was complete before they came to Canada; they were formed by alien influences; their first and fondest natural

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

allegiance is to their home land; and their hearts are always turning fondly back to the cottage, the shieling, the cabin beyond the sea. Their work, also, has exerted little or no influence upon the thought or life of Canada. It is known chiefly to students and collectors; and, in truth, with but few exceptions, it possesses only an antiquarian interest. Whatever honor or value is attached to such work cannot be credited to Canada. Heavysege's overrated *Saul*, for example, might have been written anywhere; it is not nearly as 'Canadian,' as Byron's *Beppo*, written in Italy, is Italian.

Once again, the literary movement is preceded and accompanied by magazines with more or less ambitious aims. Brief life was here their portion. As a rule they did not pay for contributions, relying upon the struggling author's pride at seeing himself in print, to fill their pages; but the pleasure soon palled. The old sets of these magazines show occasional contributions of ability, but also much flatness and many borrowings. Their

CANADIAN LITERATURE

titles, *The Canadian Magazine*, (1823-24), *The Canadian Review* (1824-26), *The Canadian Monthly* (1872-1882), *The New Dominion Monthly*, bear witness of their patriotic intention and of the intellectual life struggling to assert itself amidst pioneer conditions. Of all these publications, the most ambitious and the most remarkable was *The Week*, founded in Toronto by Goldwin Smith in 1883, upon the model of *The Saturday Review* and similar weeklies. The founder was the most distinguished denizen of Canada who ever followed the profession of letters in it. Formed by Eton and unreformed Oxford, and by the comfortable life of the wealthy English middle class, he was a Liberal in politics, an admirer of Peel, Bright and Cobden. In *My Windows On The Street Of The World*, his friend Professor Mavor shows how many and how serious were his limitations. Lampooned by Disraeli in *Lothair*, he retorted in an open letter, in which he called the Hebrew novelist's references to himself 'the sting-

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

less insults of a coward.' He had been Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford before Stubbs and Freeman: and he had been a contributor to *The Saturday Review* in the days when it was nicknamed *The Saturday Reviler*. Family reasons led him to settle in Toronto, a move which he himself regarded as unfortunate. 'My Oxford dreams of literary achievement never were or could be fulfilled in Canada,' he wrote sadly; and Matthew Arnold, a fellow Oxonian has recorded his sympathy with a man of genius compelled to dwell in such a stronghold of Philistia as Toronto. Goldwin Smith was the master of a keen, incisive, pointed style, which he applied powerfully to the criticism of Canadian politics and politicians. His sympathies with his fellow citizens were strangely imperfect, while towards the people and institutions of the United States he always seemed much more favorable. His favorite idea was the political reunion of the English race upon the American continent, an idea which set the majority

CANADIAN LITERATURE

of the Canadian people in irreconcilable opposition to him. This idea he held to the last, as his *Reminiscences* prove, *vox clamantis in deserto*. How he would have regarded Canada's lavish outpouring of blood and treasure in the Great War for the defence of Liberal principles it is impossible to imagine; for he never wrote upon the Canadian Question without lacerating Canadian susceptibilities. None the less Canadians did ample justice to his great ability and literary gifts. He was universally regarded as a tower of strength, the one great man of letters in Canada. His founding of a literary journal of the first class in Toronto was an event, which might have exerted a great influence upon a nativist literature. After a few years it failed; and its files remain as record of a unique experiment in Canadian journalism.

For editor, *The Week* secured a young New Brunswicker, fresh from college, Charles G. D. Roberts. He had published a slender volume of verse, *Orion and other Poems*, which

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

gave evidence of classical taste and a Keatsian love of beauty. The conjunction of the two personalities in the management of this journal is highly significant, as a blending of English and Canadian influences. Roberts was of United Empire Loyalist stock and was brought up in the beautiful little capital of the Loyalist province, distinguished by its cathedral and its university. Fredericton has its memories of Imperial garisons and Mrs. Ewing, the author of *Jackanapes*. Besides Roberts, it has bred two other writers of true poetry, Bliss Carman and Frank Sherman, the author of *Matins*. This kindly nurse of Canadian poets has been pictured with rare skill and sympathy by Lloyd Roberts in *The Book of Roberts*.

The full story of *The Week* with the reasons for its rise and progress, its decline and fall has not been written; but it holds an important place in the third movement of Canadian literature. New names attached to unremarked contributions crept into its columns. One of the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

earliest was that of Archibald Lampman signed to a most characteristic short poem called *A Monition*. Bliss Carman and many other Canadian *littérateurs* made their first appearance in *The Week*. It was the first Canadian critical journal; its standard was of the centre, as Matthew Arnold might say; and to win its approval was certainly a worthy object of ambition.

A little later, a second *Canadian Magazine* was launched at Toronto, which enjoys the reputation of being the most successful of its kind. Founded on the model of the popular American monthlies with illustrations and a judicious mingling of prose fiction and brief articles of a more 'solid' nature sandwiched between pieces of verse, it has been so carefully nursed and tended that it has survived for more than a quarter of a century. It paid moderately for contributions; and was therefore enabled to pick and choose. In fiction it was never strong, the rates not being high enough to divert the best short stories from the

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

American market. Its strongest point has always been the contributions to Canadian history.

Another enterprise which manifests clearly the new national impulse is the huge picture-book in two sumptuous volumes, called *Picturesque Canada*. Drafted on the lines of Bartlett's *British North America*, it was more comprehensive in plan, because there was a greater country to describe and to depict. The provinces are recognised not as rivals or foes but only as component parts of the new Dominion. It was edited by one of the most ardent and broad-minded Canadians, George Munro Grant, who was born in Nova Scotia and educated at Glasgow; and the drawings for the illustrations were made by Canadian artists such as Sandham and O'Brien. The book was made before the era of the process picture; and the artists' sketches were reproduced by the last of the engravers on wood. *The Week* bestowed its impressive benison, 'For magnitude of design and unrivalled execution it

CANADIAN LITERATURE

stands easily first among Canadian publications,' was the reviewer's verdict. Read or allowed to gather dust on the shelves, *Picturesque Canada* is yearly increasing in value as the scenes depicted in it change inevitably with time; and it will always remain as a monument of self-conscious national pride.

How the intellectual life was stirring in the half-developed province is proved by a multitude of slim volumes of verse. They form an obscure, pathetic chapter in the story of our nativist literature. Published at the author's expense, they have no sale; but are distributed among the journals and the author's friends: and that is the end of them. They are, as a rule, derivative and imitative; and also, as a rule, weak in technique. One enthusiastic amateur of Canadian letters is credited with a collection of four hundred such volumes. Indeed the writing of verse ranks almost as a national amusement like snowshoeing or tobogganning; and each volume is to be regarded as a letter of recommendation for the writer;

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

for, whatever his success, his aim has been high, and his ambition worthy. Towards all this feeble work, the attitude of the local critics was uniformly benevolent. The accepted phrase of approval was, 'a notable contribution to Canadian literature,' and it was repeated until it almost became slang. Local criticism carried no weight with the Canadian people.

Such a 'contribution' was *Among the Millet*, published at Ottawa in 1888. The author was a young member of the Civil Service, born and brought up in Ontario, a product of our public school system and a graduate of Trinity College. The book received the usual compliments and the usual neglect, until Mr. W. D. Howells 'discovered' it in *Harper's Monthly* for April, 1889. The *doyen* of American letters found in these poems 'intimate friendship with Nature:' the Canadian poet has always 'the right word on his lips.' One sonnet, *The Truth*, is characterised as 'very wise and noble.' Of the book as a whole, he

CANADIAN LITERATURE

wrote: 'Every page of it has some charm of phrase, some exquisite divination of beauty, some happily suggested truth.' This was Lampman's Montyon prize. Such praise from such a quarter persuaded Canadians of the fact that at least one native-born Canadian possessed poetical talent. Lampman wrote more verse; but he never surpassed his first essay. One of his sonnets, a thoroughly Canadian picture of a stinging winter evening, caught the eye and won the praise of Tusitala in far-off Honolulu. His poetry was even criticised in Germany. The man and his work made up one harmony. He died in 1899, too soon; for there were many who loved him and many who still hold his memory dear.

Among the Millet impressed Mr. Howells as original. 'It is mainly descriptive,' he wrote, 'but descriptive in a new fashion, most delicately pictorial and subtly thoughtful, with a high courage for the unhackneyed features and aspects of the great life around us.' What

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Lampman describes in this new fashion is simply the unhackneyed features and aspects of the great life visible in his native province. He takes for theme the march of the seasons, singing only what he knows,—the glory of the swift-footed Canadian spring, the gray river ice with the patches of blue water showing between, the welcome heat of mid-summer in which one bathes, while the brain stirs and clarifies, the mellow miraculous autumn, the oncoming of winter, the quiet endless falling of the snow till the landscape is blotted out,—and singing all without a single false note. No Canadian poet is more atmospheric than Lampman. In *Heat*, which Howells singled out for praise, he expresses the true Canadian's enjoyment of the glowing summer; and, in *Winter Hues Recalled*, his equal relish of the crisp, keen frost and of sunsets seen across leagues of white country. His attitude towards Nature is Wordsworthian. Nature is the mighty mother who never will deceive the heart that loves her. She

CANADIAN LITERATURE

offers the counter-charm to sorrow and care 'barricadoed ever more within the walls of cities.' But his method has more of the picturesqueness of Keats.

Lampman sang what he knew. Any-one who knows Ottawa, the stately capital of the Dominion, which has chosen the better part,—of Beauty, will recognise this picture.

Oh, the hum and toil of the river;
The ridge of the rapid sprays and skips
Loud and low by the water's lips,
Tearing the wet pines into strips,
The saw-mill is moaning ever.
The little grey sparrow skips and calls
On the rocks in the rain of the waterfalls,
And the logs are adrift in the river.

Like most Canadians, he knows the delight of life in the open; he had camped out; he had canoed; he had noted the inexhaustible beauty of the early summer morning, incense-breathing, far from the stain of civilisation.

Softly as a cloud we go,
Sky above and sky below,
Down the river; and the dip
Of the paddles scarcely breaks
With the little silvery drip

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Of the water as it shakes
From the blades, the crystal deep
Of the silence of the morn,
Of the forest yet asleep;
And the river reaches borne
In a mirror, purple gray,
Sheer away
To the misty line of light
Where the forest and the stream
In a shadow meet and plight,
Like a dream.

He was a true lover of Nature, studying every expression of her face and perceiving what less affectionate observation would never note. There is a mood of our Canadian climate in autumn's end, when the whole land seems to pause and wait for winter's approach. Lampman was sensitive to the mood and expressed it in those three stanzas he first called *A Monition* in *The Week*, and later renamed *The Coming of Winter*. The last quatrain is the most direct and also the most subtle.

Black grows the river, blacker drifts the eddy:
The sky is gray; the woods are cold below:
Oh make thy bosom, and thy sad lips ready
For the cold kisses of the folding snow.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

The 'high courage for the unhackneyed,' which Howells praised, is seen in Lampman's sonnets, *The Frogs*. A characteristic of the Canadian night in early spring is the clear high piping of the frogs in their ponds; but, on account of the common and grotesque nature of the creatures making it, this mating song had no interpreter. Lampman thinks of these as favorites of Pan and their up-raised voices as the only modern echo of the pipes of the goatfoot god. He recognises the quaintness, the melody and the eerie suggestion of the mysterious chorus, where the ordinary person is only conscious of ludicrous incongruity.

Then like high flutes in silvery interchange
Ye piped with voices still and sweet and
 strange,
And ever as ye piped, on every tree
The great buds swelled; among the pensive
 woods
The spirits of first flowers awoke and flung
From buried faces the close fitting hoods
And listened to your piping till they fell,
The frail spring beauty with her perfumed
 bell.
The wind-flower and the spotted adder-tongue.

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

It is no common talent which can transmute something like a national joke into pure poetry. The poet has few higher functions than awakening the dull intellect to the strange loveliness of the actual, seemingly commonplace, world which it inhabits.

Part of Lampman's charm lies undoubtedly in his ethic. Though Keatsian, he was no mere hedonist. Sincere, tender, unworldly, contemplative are the terms which describe his character; he lived in and for the ideal. His attitude is well represented in the sonnet entitled *Outlook*.

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,
But to stand free: to keep the mind at
brood

On life's deep meaning,—nature's altitude
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways.

At every thought and deed to clear the haze

Out of our eyes, considering only this

What man, what life, what love, what
beauty is,

This is to live, and win the final praise.

The ethical quality of his work excited Howells' admiration, especially in the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

sonnet *The Truth*, which contains these lines:

He that sees clear is gentlest of his words
And that's not truth that has the heart to kill.

What is essentially Canadian in Lampman's verse? It is his subtle interpretation of the land he lived in, deriving from the closest, life-long intimacy. From the first poet of a rude, raw democracy such as Canada seems to some critics, one might expect the 'barbaric yawp;' but the note of Lampman is almost ultra refinement. For the history of his country and the politics, which are present history, he had little or no interest. The human interest is also slight. Like most Canadian poets, he eschews erotic themes. To point out the influence of Wordsworth upon his thought, or of Keats upon his style is easy and unprofitable: as it is to show that certain lines and stanzas would not have been written but for exemplars in Tennyson and Swinburne. Lampman is not popular; but his verse must always

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

be reckoned in any account of the nation's intellectual riches. He is the pathfinder of a new region of song. Before him, no author so purely Canadian had written verse so deeply imbued with the very spirit of Canada.

Charles G. D. Roberts was born at Fredericton, N.B. in 1860, the son of a clergyman and the eldest of a talented family. He was formed by Canadian influences, the public school, the provincial university, the scenery about his birthplace. At the university he carried away many prizes. His subsequent career was varied. After teaching school in his native province, he became editor of *The Week* for about a year. Later, he was professor at King's College, Windsor, where some of his best work was done. Then he filled various positions in New York and latterly he has lived abroad on the continent and in London. When the Great War broke out, he joined the King's Liverpool Regiment, and saw service during the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Sinn Fein revolt in Dublin. He was a man of extraordinary vitality and muscular strength disguised by a moderate physique. In temperament he was the eternal youth.

The literary activity of Roberts has hardly been surpassed by any of his Canadian contemporaries. It began with the publication of *Orion* in 1880, and has continued for more than forty-five years. A long list of volumes in prose and verse stands to his credit; and his poetry has been criticised in a monograph by Professor Cappon of Queen's, perhaps the most masculine judgment in Canada. Roberts is the name most often mentioned whenever Canadian literature is discussed; his place is conspicuous and sure among the pioneers of Canadian verse.

His first volume of verse was classic in the mode of Keats, as became a young collegian who had carried off prizes in Latin and Greek. *Marsyas* is most successful in rendering the clear unmoving atmosphere that haunts the *Ode to a*

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Grecian Urn. Canadian verse shows its amateurishness in defective technique, the forced rhyme, the padded line, the otiose epithet, the cloudy syntax, the lack of rule and proportion, the inability to handle a chosen metre consistently. But Roberts had followed good models, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson: and his verse was not merely free from the usual distressing flaws in workmanship, but possessed genuine melody. As Cappon notes, he had the singing gift. The year 1880 must always be an important date in the literary annals of Canada: it saw the issue of a book of true poetry by a truly Canadian writer.

In Divers Tones (1886) registers a distinct advance on his first volume, especially in the range of themes. Unlike Lampman, Roberts took an interest in the young, growing nation. It was Roberts, the New Brunswicker who wrote the *Collect for Dominion Day*, and uttered the sentiment

Surely the lion's brood is strong
To front the world alone.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

It was Roberts who was to write, what is, in spite of its inaccuracies, the best single volume history of Canada, and to make various excursions, not altogether happy, into the region of historical romance, for which he found material in the early days of Acadie. About his work, from first to last, there is nothing provincial except that the Nature he celebrates wears the face of the landscape he knows best, the landscape of the Atlantic seaboard.

Songs of the Common Day (1893) marks a bold departure from the themes which pleased him first. Turning from the classic, he elects the homely. Side by side with the contest between the sun-god and Marsyas in some dim Arcady are ranged distinctly Canadian cow-pastures and potato-fields. His purpose is revealed in his invocation to Night, the 'grave Mysteriarch'

Make thou my vision sane and clear,
That I might see what beauty clings
In common forms, and find the soul
Of unregarded things.

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Here the influence of Wordsworth is unmistakable. The sonnet sequence forms a complete cycle, a sort of poet-farmer's calendar. It begins with the first furrow in the spring plowing and follows the course of the seasons round to the spring again. Picture comes before thought, which is rather a denial of the sonnet nature; but the pictures remain in the memory by virtue of the truthful observation which has made them. Every Canadian will recognise the

Barn by many seasons beaten grey,—
the burnt lands peopled by
Giant trunks, bleak shapes that once were
trees,—

the raw clearing, all

Stumps and harsh rocks, and prostrate trunks
all charred
And gnarled roots naked to the sun and rain.

More graceful is the picture of the pea-fields;

These are the fields of light, and laughing air,
And yellow butterflies and foraging bees,
And whitish wayward blossoms winged as
these.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Even the prosaic pumpkins between the long lines of tent-like piles of cornstalks in the cold autumn morning make a French impressionist picture.

Purple the narrowing alleys stretched between
The spectral shooks, a purple harsh and cold
But spotted, where the gadding pumpkins
run,
With bursts of blaze that startle the serene,
Like sudden voices, globes of orange bold,—

These are characteristic features of the Canadian scene, east and west, and the poet has not only himself succeeded in seeing the beauty of common things but he is able to make the reader who is no poet, see them also.

The same volume contains *Ave*, printed separately the year before, a commemoration ode on Shelley, for the hundredth anniversary of his birth. This is Roberts' best poem and probably the best poem *de longue haleine* ever written by a Canadian. It is frankly modelled on Arnold's *Thyrsis*, with certain alterations in the verse-scheme of the sonorous ten-line stanza. There is an

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

intimate relation between the scenery about Oxford and Clough; but there is no apparent connection between the marshes of a tidal river in Nova Scotia—

River of hubbub, raucous Tantramar

—and Shelley. None the less, Roberts bridges the gap rather skilfully, and makes a harmonious synthesis, as is the poet's right. Very significant is the large part taken by the new world landscape; it serves as introduction, spacious, dignified and self-contained, to the main purpose, the celebration of the poet who never saw it—

—grassy Tantramar

Wide marshes ever washed in clearest air,

The characterisation of Shelley and his work has been much admired. All that is best of him is brought together in a single stanza, in a series of graceful allusions.

Thyself the lark melodious in mid-heaven;

Thyself the Protean shape of chainless cloud,
Pregnant with elemental fire, and driven

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Through deeps of quivering light, and darkness loud
With tempest, yet beneficent as prayer:
Thyself the wild west wind, relentless strewing
The withered leaves of custom on the air
And through the wreck pursuing
O'er lovelier Arnos, more imperial Romes
Thy radiant visions to their viewless homes.

Ave is the most sincere of Roberts' poems: he had a genuine feeling for the landscape and a real reverence for Shelley. According to Cappon, it is 'a splendid rhetorical effort, a bold but somewhat irregular flight of fancy through the empyrean.' After Roberts left Canada for the United States, his verse changed in quality. His *New York Nocturnes* are largely erotic, or sentimental. Few careful readers of his work will be inclined to dissent from Cappon's summing up: 'He has the true singing quality.' But he 'needs a sterner literary conscience . . . His work belongs too much to the region of artistic experiment. His constant transformations too, and the ethical heterogeneity of his work take away something of the

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

impression of sincerity and depth, which the poetry ought to give.'

Roberts has also written a great deal of prose. His *History of Canada* has its faults, but it enjoys the rare distinction of being eminently readable. It is well proportioned and clearly ordered; and, as it represents throughout the Canadian point of view, it is a good book to put into the hand of the foreigner who wishes to understand the country and the people. His novels, *A Sister to Evangeline*, and so on are rather feeble performances and reveal the mawkish strain which affects some of his verse unpleasantly. Where Roberts really found himself was in his short stories of animal life. For this task he was specially qualified; for he knew the woods and streams and wild creatures of his native province intimately. His apprenticeship to teaching had made him critical and had reacted favorably upon his own prose. It is probable that his reputation will rest ultimately upon *Earth's Enigmas*, and the many volumes

CANADIAN LITERATURE

of similar studies of wild life. Roberts was judged by the late W. H. Hudson as supreme in this *genre*.

With Roberts must always be associated his cousin Bliss Carman, who was born at Fredericton in 1861, and educated under Parkin at the local academy. Like so many other youths of the time, he found it impossible to live by the pen in Canada and sought his opportunity in the United States. There he filled various positions upon the staffs of various journals and magazines; and there he acquired his greatest reputation. It was a joy to the critics to discover that his poetic-looking name was not a *nom de guerre*, but lawfully his own. When one of his lyrics was included in the *Oxford Book of Verse*, this recognition by a critic of the 'centre' first convinced the poet's countrymen that his work had merit. Carman's output is so considerable that it has attained the unique honor among Canadian poets, of forming the subject of a doctor's dis-

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

sertation, accepted by the university of Rennes.

Carman's first volume, *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, was published in New York in 1893 and almost immediately went into a second edition. Though he wrote much after his removal from Canada, he never regained 'the first fine careless rapture' of this thoroughly Canadian book of lyrics. Across the border, he fell under other influences—of Boston plus Browning in the weird days of Browning societies—and of a certain calculated Bohemianism which led him into a strange region yclept Vagabondia. Frankly, his later work became vague and affected. His tendency to be formless became confirmed; and much of his later verse seems purely experimental. He is generally adopted by the Americans in their genial fashion as an 'American' poet, a claim, which, perhaps, he has not been unwilling to admit.

The sub-title of *Low Tide on Grand Pré* was *A Book of Lyrics*, and it is accurately descriptive. Here for the first

CANADIAN LITERATURE

time in the story of Canadian letters appears the true lyric, 'simple, sensuous, passionate.' Though there are echoes of other poets here and there, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Carman has a distinctive manner of his own. Such modes as these are undiluted music.

Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses in our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waning meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands?

And all her heart
Is a woven part
Of the flurry and drift
Of whirling snow;
For the sake of two
Sad eyes and true
And the old, old love
So long ago.

Still the Guelder roses bloom
And the sunlight fills the room,

Where love's shadow at the door
Falls upon the dusty floor.

These were all undeniable successes; but without doubt, the strongest form is the simple ballad quatrain which Heine used so well. The true lyricist does not follow

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

after eccentricity. He takes the tune consecrated by ages of use, the verse form that comes easiest to the lips of the common people; and to both he gives new content and the imprint of his own hand. Carman has many stanzas like this,

She knows the morning ways whereon
 The windflower and the wind confer;
Behold there is not any fear
 Upon the farthest trail with her.

and like this, with a trochaic movement

For man walks the world with mourning
 Down to death, and leaves no trace,
With the dust upon his forehead,
 And the shadow in his face.

Such consummate mastery of the instrument was unique in Canada and rare anywhere. Apart from the thought, or the suggestion of pictorial beauty, such verse is a charm, to croon over to oneself for pure joy in lightly tripping procession of well ordered words. They meet the final test of the lyric; they will not out of the memory. To read them once is to be haunted henceforth by shapes of grace and echoes of elfin sweetness.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

The general mood is pensive, as the title suggests. Grand Pré is classic ground as the scene of *Evangeline*. The great wind-swept reaches of meadow and marsh-land beside the blue waters of Minas Basin, the old French willows about the well of the vanished village are imbued with the sense of tears. Low tide suggests the ebb of life, and love, and all good things. Over all these poems broods the deep but not unwelcome melancholy of youth. Some are a lover's half confidences of love—longing and loss, and, like Wordsworth's, intended for a lover's ear alone; but often the personal note, at no time insistent or plaintive, is merged in deeper, fuller strains. These may be called hymns to Cybele, Magna Mater. The relation between

—the great Mother of us all,
Whose moulded dust and dew we are
With the blown flower by the wall.

and her poet-son is one of perfect understanding, of grave tenderness without a shadow of gloom. Since Wordsworth,

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

there is nothing new in regarding Nature as the Consoler, but Carman treats the well-worn theme with an air of distinction, entirely his own.

Still the old secret shifts and waits
The last interpreter—

This interpreter is worthy of his great charge; he has found new meaning in the old text. *Wayfaring* is a very musical expression of his vague pantheism.

And all the world is but a scheme
Of busy children in the street,
A play they follow and forget
On summer evenings, pale with heat.

But waiting in the fields for them
I see the ancient Mother stand,
With the old courage of her smile,
The patience of her sunbrown hand.

They heed her not, until there comes
A breath of sleep upon their eyes,
A drift of dust upon their face
Then in the closing dusk they rise,

And turn them to the empty doors;

This is the old antithesis of Wordsworth and Arnold between our feverish, futile human life and the calm deep majesty of this world's beauty; but seldom has the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

antithesis been drawn with more grace.

Carman has none of Roberts' feeling for Canada as a nation; but this first volume is thoroughly Canadian in scene and atmosphere. His backgrounds so delicately limned are taken from the beautiful region about Windsor. *Ardise* is a real name, from *ardoise* because of the slate quarries: so also with 'mining Rawdon' and 'Pereau.' In *A Northern Vigil* and elsewhere, he uses these place names most aptly.

Come, for the night is cold,
The ghostly moonlight fills
Hollow and rift and fold
Of the eerie *Ardise* hills!

The windows of my room
Are dark with bitter frost—

That picture of Canadian winter applies to the whole country. This 'impression' is specially Acadian, where no point of the province is more than thirty miles from the sea

Harvest with her low red planets
Wheeling over Arrochar;
And the lonely hopeless calling
Of the bell-buoy on the bar.

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Carman's great gifts are music and the power of inducing glamor.

W. W. Campbell is an Ontario man, born in 1860 and educated in the public schools of the province. For some time he was a clergyman, with a small cure in New England. In 1891, he gave up the church and entered the Canadian Civil Service at Ottawa. His appointment was the very last made by Sir John A. Macdonald. His first volume *Lake Lyrics and Other Poems* was published at St. John, N.B., in 1889. Campbell has written a great deal. His collected poems, published in 1905 is a book of three hundred and fifty pages. He has essayed drama and prose fiction. Canadian scenery has been his inspiration, especially the region of the Great Lakes from which his first volume takes its name. His work is serious and thoughtful; but singularly lacking in technique. Nor did he show any inclination to listen to his critics and profit by their counsel. He seemed to hold that thought and

CANADIAN LITERATURE

emotion will redeem all faults in the construction of a poem. But no one has rendered some phases of Canadian Nature with truer inspiration. His lyric *Indian Summer*, for example, is perfect.

Along the line of smoky hills
The crimson forest stands,
And all the day the blue-jay calls
Throughout the autumn lands.

Now by the brook the maple leans
With all his glory spread,
And all the sumachs on the hills
Have turned their green to red.

Now by great marshes wrapt in mist,
Or past some river's mouth,
Throughout the long, still autumn day
Wild birds are flying south.

Another precious whiff of song straight from the open fields and the spaces of the sky embodies a mood of Nature which every Nature-lover knows—the curious pause which follows the stir of awaking life in the hour of sunrise, before the day grows hot and busy.

The night blows outward in a mist,
And all the world the sun has kissed.

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

Along the golden rim of sky
A thousand snow-piled vapors lie.

And by the wood and mist clad stream,
The maiden morn stands still to dream.

Nothing is lacking,—inspiration, delicacy of touch, truth of observation, finish. Had Campbell written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

In prose fiction, the second sphere of the creative imagination, Canadians had never shown the ability so manifest in their poetry. Before Confederation, the so-called Canadian novelists were either denizens who happened to choose Canadian themes, generally historical, or else Canadians by birth whose work had absolutely nothing to do with Canada, like De Mille's facile exercises in the prevailing literary fashions, such as the mystery tale of Wilkie Collins. In the eighties of the last century, when Canadians were asked to name a Canadian novel, they could only cite *The Golden Dog* of William Kirby, (1817-1906). He was an Englishman by birth, who came to

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Montreal as a boy and spent the greater part of his life at Niagara, where he was editor of *The Mail* for twenty-five years. *The Golden Dog* is an ambitious historical novel on a large scale dealing with the death agony of New France. It has undoubted power; but it also has its *longueurs*. The French of Quebec find the picture of their past acceptable. It has been translated by Fréchette and Le May. Even if the merits friendly critics find in this story be admitted, still one swallow does not make a summer, nor one good novel a nation's literary reputation. But a great change was coming.

The fruitful decade between 1880 and 1890 saw the beginning of that change. *Place aux dames!* Sara Jeanette Duncan was a genuine product of the new Canada. Born and brought up in the typical Ontario town of Brantford, with its memories of a great Indian chieftain and the inventor of the telephone, Miss Duncan served her apprenticeship to literature in the exacting school of journalism. For years she

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

conducted the woman's page of *The Globe* (Toronto) under the name of Garth Grafton. In 1890, her first book appeared, *A Social Departure; or How Orthodocia and I Went Round the World by Ourselves*. It is the wittiest book of travels ever written by a Canadian; it was a success; and, naturally *The Illustrated London News* called the author an 'American.' All the qualities of Miss Duncan's best work are to be found in this charming volume, the light, bright, easy style which never becomes slovenly, the quiet, all-pervading wit which is nearer the French *esprit*, and the keen powers of observation. That sense of international values, the subtle shades of difference between the English, the Canadians and Americans is shown here in the difference between herself and Orthodocia, a typical British spinster of the Victorian era. This is one quality which makes such novels as *Those Delightful Americans* so much more agreeable reading to a Canadian than to either his American, or his English, cousins. Miss

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Duncan is a social satirist of the Jane Austen type: and her wit is that peculiarly feminine kind which conveys a sting in the mere statement of the fact.

The deserved success of this first volume, and of the long series of novels and stories which followed it is proof positive that Canadian conditions unaided can form a writer of outstanding ability.

Miss Duncan married Mr. Everett Cotes, a journalist in Calcutta, and went to live in India. There she found ample material for fiction. *The Simple Adventures of a Mem-Sahib* is in her own original vein. Unfortunately, think some of her admirers, she forsook her own methods for those of Henry James. *The Path of a Star*, for example, is in her later manner. She has written only one story which deals with Canadian life, *The Imperialist* (1904), which first ran in *The Globe* as a serial; but that story stands out from the vast desert of well-intentioned mediocrity known as Canadian fiction. Its distinction lies in its choice of theme and its truth of observa-

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

tion. It does not deal with the romantic periods of our history, nor of the Acadian French, nor of the adventurous west, but of plain, *bourgeois*, money-getting Ontario and the humdrum activities of a little town which grows slowly in wealth and population, and in which the greatest excitements are a tea-meeting or a Dominion election. The characters are all carefully drawn. The Murchisons are a typical 'common Canadian' family. Hesketh, the patronising 'Englishman in Canada' is not a caricature. In the English-speaking parts of Canada there is a real homogeneity, no matter how widely they are scattered; and the types of *The Imperialist* are to be found both east and west. True as this novel is, it was not a popular success. The appearance in *The Globe* of a tale preaching that salvation for the Empire could only come by Joseph Chamberlain was something of a joke; and perhaps Mrs. Cotes had been too long out of Canada. Perhaps the book was too true.

About the time that Lampman was

CANADIAN LITERATURE

winning recognition in New York another Canadian writer began to make head in an entirely different quarter. In that part of *The Illustrated London News* where such masterpieces as *The Beach of Falesà* had appeared, a series of short stories began called *Parables of a Province*. This was the work of Mr. Gilbert Parker, and his fellow Canadians rejoiced in this success as a tribute to Canada. He was born in Camden East, Ontario, in 1862 and is therefore exactly the age of Roberts and W. W. Campbell. He was educated in the usual Ontario manner and studied arts and theology at Trinity College, Toronto. He took deacon's orders, and, for a time, was curate at Trenton. In 1885, he went to Australia, and worked on the staff of the *Morning Herald*, of Sydney. Parker has gone far. He made a wealthy marriage and settled in London, entered Parliament, became a knight, a baronet, a privy councillor. He is the first conspicuous example of a Canadian literary

THE NATIONAL IMPULSE

man 'succeeding,' in the popular sense of the term.

Parker has written many tales; and several are ostensibly Canadian in scene. They deal either with the remote Northwest, as *The Chief Factor* and *Pretty Pierre*, or with French Canada, as *When Valmond Came to Pontiac*. It cannot be denied that they have attained to popularity; and therewith the distinguished author ought to rest content. They have never pleased the critical, though they have been praised in terms which could not be applied without modification to the romances of Scott or Hugo. The truth is that the vast majority of novels are born but to die. They are the veriest ephemeræ. In this struggle for existence only those rare works which combine deep knowledge of life, dramatic power to represent it and style, have a chance to survive. Parker's Canada seems to the Canadian utterly unreal, a sort of *La Scribie*, where labelled puppets are pulled about by very obvious strings and mop and mow in a ghastly affecta-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

tion of life. His Pretty Pierre stories seem a poor imitation of Bret Harte: his pictures of French-Canadian life are not recognisable in Quebec. Indeed, the chief significance of Parker in this third literary movement is that he was formed by Canada, that he was the first popular success and that his success was based on fiction treating Canadian subjects and knowing no east and no west.

The whole movement is clearly defined in time and place. Ontario is the home of it; with Toronto and Ottawa as strong centres of attraction. The writers in it are all children at the time of Confederation, they are formed by the institutions then created, they all begin to produce and to emerge into notice in the same decade. The national impress is upon them all; and all win recognition and even popularity outside their own country. The stream of production was destined to widen immensely as were also the bounds of success. In the meantime, a second French school of peculiar interest, came into being in Montreal.

Parker's novels 142 sum to
no putative

4. In Montreal

CHAPTER IV IN MONTREAL



EVOLT, self-conscious and organised, is the mark of the fourth literary movement in Canada. As the first school of French-Canadian literature had its home in Quebec, it was not unfitting that the second should have its home in Montreal; for the two schools are distinct and even opposed in their aims and ideals. They have in common, however, the French instinct for forming a *cénacle*, or clique, for the deliberate cultivation of literature. The English tendency is for each man to go his own way; the French is social, to benefit by intercourse, discussion, criticism, the light and warmth struck out by the impact of mind on mind.

During the last decade of the nine-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

teenth century, a number of young Frenchmen in Montreal with literary ambitions did so organise themselves into such a school or society. The movement first becomes defined by the publication of *Le Glaneur* and *L'Echo des Jeunes* in 1892. These were literary journals in which the new tendencies were to find expression. The first number of the *Echo des Jeunes* contained a declaration of war upon the old crumbling idols which had been feared so long and which were the enemies of progress. They were therefore of necessity the enemies of *Les Jeunes*. The Montreal school was, in fact, a school of romantic revolt against the old classical school of Quebec. In the manifesto of these youths appeared the usual watchwords, 'liberty,' 'emancipation of thought,' 'enemies of progress;' and in their journal they reprinted poems from the most advanced, not to say decadent, reviews of France. Their audacious challenge provoked immediate criticism. They drew the fire of the veteran journalist,

IN MONTREAL

Arthur Buies. Though he had fought for Garibaldi, when the Papal Zouaves were fighting against the Italian patriot, and though he had edited the witty, anti-clerical *Lanterne*, Buies had sunk back into the natural conservatism of age, and the instinctive opposition to everything new. He finds a school without masters an absurdity; it can be nothing but a mutual admiration society. If these boys must form a school, let them take men with solid reputations for their instructors; and the instructors were even named. He gave them the advice old men always give the young,

Choose honour'd guide and practised road.

Happily the advice was disregarded; unless young men forsook the old guides and the beaten track, progress were a dream.

Although these ephemeral journals published nothing of real importance, they showed what tendencies were at work; and they prepared the way for what has been called 'the most original

CANADIAN LITERATURE

effort of intellectual Canada to organise itself and find a way out of the amateurishness in which the national poets struggled and wallowed at this end of the nineteenth century.' Towards the end of 1895, when *L'Echo des Jeunes* was on its death-bed, a remarkable announcement appeared in *La Presse* and various other Montreal papers. It was to the effect that a group of young men in that city had decided to form themselves into a school of literature. A constitution had been drafted, a programme of studies had been marked out, and a managing committee had been formed. This committee undertook to revise the works of literary aspirants, and had power to accept or reject candidates for admission to the society. The mention of a programme of studies and the promise to revise manuscripts would indicate that *Les Jeunes* had laid to heart the advice to include masters as well as pupils in their 'school.' The members were young university graduates, who have since become, for the most part, lawyers

IN MONTREAL

or journalists. First and last, they numbered about forty, the figure of the Immortals of the French Academy.

Thus organised, the new school set to work, with enthusiasm, to produce literature, and, for three years, it wrought hard and in silence at this noble task. It met on Friday evenings in the historic Château de Ramezay, once the residence of royal governors, now the museum of Montreal. The account Charles Gill gives of these sessions of sweet thought is most engaging, and resembles Abbé Casgrain's ideal picture of the gatherings in Crémazie's back-shop, thirty years before.

'If some inquisitive person had ventured on a Friday evening into this historic dwelling which was usually shut at this hour of the day, after having passed through a dark hall decorated with old portraits, arrow-heads and tomahawks, he would enter a little room, where he would see four lawyers, two newspaper men, a doctor, a bookseller, five students, a notary and a painter assembled round

CANADIAN LITERATURE

a table covered with a green cloth, which was strewn with manuscripts. It was the School of Literature to which the historic building offered sanctuary for that night. . . .

'It was a school without masters. No one had the right to raise his voice above his neighbor's. And as there was no honor to court beyond the plaudits of his friends, when a lucky rhyme pierced the clouds of cigarette smoke, or some well expressed passage made us hold our breath, jealousy had not cast its black shadow over our enthusiasm. The infrequent compliments, like the criticisms were sincere. Everyone was eager to offer his latest masterpiece for consideration and bring to the board what had chiefly interested him during the week. One member would appear with the latest best seller; another, with the first book of a new author, while a third would bring his copy of Leconte de Lisle for the purpose of quoting his divinity in an argument with a friend who knew his Lamartine by heart. After

IN MONTREAL

the consideration of the manuscripts came an hour of good talk when paradox had free course, plans jostled plans, fancy suggested fancy and fallacy was swallowed up in fallacy. . . .'

It is a pleasing idyll, thus presented.

While the manifold activities of Canada's commercial metropolis are in full flood all about them, a knot of young idealists withdraw and devote themselves to the things of the intellect and the imagination; they find an appropriate home in a building which links them with their country's past; and they vie with one another in their efforts to increase their country's true glory by making contributions to the literature of power. The school prospered, and became so important that Fréchette consented to become its honorary president. Then, after this long period of incubation, *Les Jeunes* offered their works for public approval. During the years 1898-1900, they held four public meetings, three in the Château de Ramezay and one in the Monument National.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

The general idea of these feasts of reason was to serve a very solid central dish amid light garnishings, sweet and savory, of the youthful authors' own confection. At the first meeting, Fréchette read his five-act drama, *Véronica*; at the second, Senator David gave a lecture on Baldwin and La Fontaine; at the third, Mr. Jean Charbonneau discoursed on Symbolism, a theme germane to the school's activities; and at the fourth, the President, Larose, reproduced the counsels of Philistia as delivered to the students of Eastman College, Poughkeepsie, by the lips of the American oracle, Chauncey M. Depew! This must have been a staggering blow to any school of literature; but worse was to follow. When the *Soirées du Château de Ramezay*, an anthology of the works of *Les Jeunes*, was published in 1900, it was found that this same president Larose had filled more than a fourth of its four hundred pages with his own work, a proceeding which would seem to argue an imperfect sense of proportion. The school, in conse-

IN MONTREAL

quence, came to an untimely end and, though there was a suggestion of reviving it in 1907, it has passed, like the Quebec school, into the domain of history.

The difference between these two schools is very strongly marked. They differ first in choice of theme. The Quebec poets found inspiration almost exclusively in Canada and the Church. It was distinctly patriotic and religious in tone. With exceptions which hardly count, the Montreal poets avoid these fruitful themes. None of 'Les Jeunes' writes a second *Légende d'un Peuple*; and if he chooses a distinctly religious subject, such as the Nativity, his treatment is rather philosophical and fanciful than devout. The second point of difference is in the French authors admired and imitated. For the Quebec school, the masters were Victor Hugo and Lamartine; the originality of the Montreal school consisted in taking Hérédia the complete sonneteer and Leconte de Lisle for their models. Like their predeces-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

sors, 'Les Jeunes' excel particularly in descriptive poetry. They have incurred one critic's blame for attempting to describe what they have not seen,—in a word, the exotic. Like their predecessors, and also like their English contemporaries, they hardly venture to approach the universal theme of youthful poets,—love and the revel of the senses. Here indeed is a huge *lacuna* in Canadian literature, waiting to be filled. Some poems of Lozeau speak feelingly of love; but they stand almost alone. As the old school showed the influence of the great romantic poets of France, the new school showed the influence of the late Parnassians. The young enthusiasts of Montreal were, in fact, modern; and, although the movement never came to its full strength, and, although the work published in the *Soirées de Ramezay* is often crude and faulty, it was more than justified in that it brought forward two young men of more than average talent. These were Émile Nelligan and Albert Lozeau.

IN MONTREAL

In 1903 there was published in Montreal a small volume of verse entitled *Émile Nelligan et son Œuvre*, with a biographical introduction by Louis Dantin. The frontispiece is a portrait of the author. It is in every way a remarkable face—the smooth face of a boy and Irish in every feature, in thorough accord with his Irish name and Irish parentage. The strong nose and chin, the broad mouth, the full lips drooping at the corners, the strongly marked eyebrows, the clear eyes, the thick handsome mop of dark hair are all as Irish as they can be. The expression is dreamy and sad, but there is alertness and vigor in the poise of the head. Change the dress slightly, or cover it, and you would see a typical Irish girl of the peasant class. It is an attractive and a pathetic face, which prepares the reader for the tragedy of Nelligan's life, and the strange quality of his verse.

It is not a long story. The son of an Irish father and a French mother, Nelligan was born in Montreal in 1882.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

His home life was unhappy. His education at the College of Montreal and at the Jesuit College was imperfect, owing to his idle habits and dislike of discipline, maladies most incident to genius. Conformably to the tradition of young poets at school, he followed his own bent in reading rather than the prescriptions of the curriculum, but explorations in Voltaire are not encouraged in the Jesuit College. A post as book-keeper was found for him, but Pegasus went ill in harness. His one desire was literary fame,—to see his poems published—and he tried to put into practice the alluring theory that the world owes its poets a living. He was a citizen of Bohemia, or the Latin Quarter, rather than of Montreal, but his Bohemianism seems never to have gone further than such pardonable affectations as his overcoat flying open, his hair on end and his fingers consistently inked. The Celtic melancholy that is plain to read in his face as in his verse, at last overwhelmed him. His mind gave way and, though

IN MONTREAL

he still lives, it is as a hopeless patient in a retreat for the insane.

Through the pious care of his friends who took part in the Friday evening meetings at the Château de Ramezay, the desire of the boy has been fulfilled. This little book contains a selection from his voluminous manuscripts, all that has been judged worthy to live and to perpetuate his memory. Charles ab der Halden says of it: *'Ce n'est que par la brièveté de son souffle et l'inégalité de son inspiration qu'on devine l'écolier et l'enfant. Mais cet enfant avait du génie.*

C'est la seule fois, on voudra bien le remarquer, que nous avons employé ce mot en parlant d'un écrivain canadien.'

The first impression of his verse is how little it has to do with Canada. For him Canadian history, Canadian landscape do not exist. No wreath of maple leaves entwines his page. Except for their spiritual purity—the constant mark of all Canadian poetry—it would be hard to determine from internal evidence the place of their origin. Nor does he

CANADIAN LITERATURE

write of France; he avoids the common affectation of idolising the mother country; he has not a word on the Napoleon legend. In fact, this poet has hardly eyes for the external world; he looks into his heart and writes. He is subjective, even egotistic, if you will; his own experience, his own inner life is his supreme interest. He is unaffectedly sad, a pessimist whilst yet a boy, with the black shadow of madness hanging over him. Some of his work is faulty and unequal; but it must be remembered that his career ended at nineteen. Then the black shadow descended and has never lifted since. All deductions made, his achievement is unique in the history of Canadian literature.

Strangeness is the 'note' of Nelligan. His world is like Poe's, his own creation of exotic fancies, out of space, out of time. How remote from the usual and the conventional are the bold images of *Le Vaisseau d'Or*:—

'It was a mighty Ship carved out of solid gold. Her masts touched the blue

IN MONTREAL

sky, on undiscovered seas. At the prow flaunted the Cyprian queen of love, with flying hair and naked flesh, in overplus of sun.

‘But one night the Ship struck on a vast reef in the treacherous main, where the Siren sang; and the dreadful wreck sank her keel into the depths of the Abyss, an everlasting tomb.

‘It was a Ship of gold: her transparent sides held treasures over which the unholy mariners, Disgust, Hatred, and Madness quarrelled among themselves.

‘What is left of it in the sudden storm? What has become of my heart, that abandoned ship? Alas! it foundered in the Abyss of Dreams.’

Fantastical as this poem may seem, the image is clear: the ‘*grand vaisseau taillé dans l’or massif*’ swims into our ken, her masts raking the blue above fairy seas forlorn. ‘“There was a ship,” quoth he.’ Ab der Halden questions if any Canadian poet before Nelligan had really created a poetic image.

Nelligan abounds in strange, quick-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

coming fancies. He has visions of a red, spectral ox with sea-green horns which goes lowing in the sunset,—of a noble Viennese lady in violet gauze, seated in her carven chair, turning with ivory fingers the well-worn vellum of an old missal,—of a negro servitor bearing in to the banquet the truffled turkey on a broad silver platter. The feminine quality in Nelligan reveals itself in his love of quaint luxurious interiors, such as he conjures up in *Pastels et Porcelaines*. The old-world *salon* with tarnished lace, where still glitters the brocade of sofas from Japan, is used as a background more than once. Sometimes the poet sees a dance of the dead there, or fancies that the old fan is stirred by the fingers of some bygone beauty. He has also a half feminine, half artistic feeling for rich decoration and articles of luxury. On his window-panes the frost has chiselled fine fantastic vases, jewels of goldsmith's work, the pride of Cellini; Gretchen's dear fingers bear constellations of curious rings; in Em-

IN MONTREAL

meline's deserted boudoir, camelias are languishing in a glass bowl; her jewels scattered on the onyx table mingle their reflections in sides of silver boxes. This esthetic delight in dainty and beautiful things for their own sake puts Nelligan in a class by himself.

One technical peculiarity of Nelligan's verse is very grateful to English ears, accustomed as they are to the strongly marked cadences of their native poetry, and that is their sonority. As a rule, French verse lacks body; it is not satisfactory to read aloud. But Nelligan has lines like these:

Je rêve de marcher comme un conquistador,
Haussant mon labarum triomphal de victoire,
Plein de fierté farouche et de valeur notoire,
Vers des assauts de ville aux tours de bronze et
d'or.

They fill the mouth and the ear almost like a stanza by Macaulay or Swinburne. According to his most judicious critic, Nelligan's poetry is *symboliste* in idea, and *parnassien* in structure. He loves the curious word and the far-fetched epi-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

thet; and yet the strange vocables denoting strange ideas blend readily with the less recondite terms. Along with true inspiration he had the true artist's passion for perfection, the capacity for taking pains, and the rare faculty of self-criticism. Wherever it is possible to compare earlier and later versions of the same poem, the advantage is always with the revision.

The influence of the Church in Quebec is hard to escape; and, in spite of his Bohemianism, Nelligan owes more to Rome than does Lozeau, for example. The poetry of her ritual, the eye-striking splendor of her accessories appealed strongly to the artist in him. Like so many other poets, like Arnold at the Grande Chartreuse, he is at once attracted and repelled by the life of renunciation. Attraction and repulsion are both visible in *Le Cloître noir*:—

'To the muffled chant of their sandals,
they pass along, heads bent, and finger-
ing their heavy rosaries, bead by bead.

'The evening, as it wanes, reddens the

IN MONTREAL

funereal splendor of the flag-stones with reflections as of blood.

'Suddenly they are blotted out at the end of the corridors filled with relays of purple, as in labyrinths of shadow, where great angels emblazoned on the panes deny all ingress to earthly offences.

'Their faces are mournful; and in their tranquil eyes, as in the wide horizons at sea, flames the austerity of passionless habitudes.

'Light divine fills their ample spirits, for triumphant hope built the solitudes of these mute spectres of Jesus Christ.'

It is significant that Nelligan should work over a first version into this far superior form; and also that by some apish fantasy he should provide variants for the final lines, which turn them into blasphemy. One section of the book, *Petite Chapelle*, is devoted to poems owing their inspiration to the externals of Catholicism, and is by no means the least impressive part of it.

The melancholy of Nelligan is deep

CANADIAN LITERATURE

and unaffected. As a youth he looks back upon and regrets his lost childhood. The oldest and truest friends are gone; he yearns for sympathy and a spiritual love, but he finds himself alone in a black, hateful, lying world. Images of death haunt him—a hearse in the autumn fog and rain; the coffin-maker and his secrets; the monk dead in his cell; the artist lifeless on his pallet. Nelligan had a passionate love of music, but he heard only funeral marches. Even in his lighter moments, as in *Five O'clock*, he catches only the eternal note of sadness in the compositions of Mendelssohn and Liszt. His sadness has the direct and poignant appeal of real emotion. That sadness together with the strangeness of his imagery and the rich music of his verse set him in a niche apart from all his fellows. His tragic end will also serve to consecrate his memory.

Un aigle royal en plein ciel foudroyé.

Regarding Albert Lozeau, the second outstanding talent of the Montreal

IN MONTREAL

school, the most important biographical fact is that he belongs to the class which religious people call 'shut-in.' In his boyhood he was stricken with a disease which confined him to his room and his bed. He was long an invalid; and though by skilful surgery, his condition was improved, he died in 1924. One thinks of Heine who lay so long on his *matrazengruft* in Paris, equalled with him in fate. Of himself, Lozeau writes: 'For nine years I lay with my heels as high as my head: that taught me humility. I rhymed to kill time, which was killing me. . . . It is because I had not taken my classical course, that I know no Latin, which is indispensable for writing well in French. I had finished a commercial course when sickness laid me on my back. I knew absolutely nothing of French literature; and I was bed-ridden and very ill when I learned of the existence of Chénier, Hugo, Lamartine, Musset, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, and the other great masters. Lacking all preparation, I could only enjoy them im-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

perfectly. It was through the old books my friends handed on to me that I learned about them and that the rhyming plague affected me. I say rhyming plague, but for me it was a godsend. I firmly believe it snatched me from despair and death.' A more truthful or more appealing autobiographical fragment would be hard to find.

In consequence of his malady he could not actually take part in the 'evenings' at the Château de Ramezay; but he is naturally in close alliance with 'Les Jeunes.' Perhaps his isolation did him little harm, for it led him less into imitation of the modern masters acknowledged by the Montreal school and more to the intensive cultivation of his own true and delicate talent. He has an appreciative sonnet, a form he prefers, on Baudelaire and another on Nelligan, whom he calls 'an eagle lightning-smitten in mid heaven.' He has published two volumes of verse *L'Âme Solitaire* and *Le Miroir des Jours*; his

IN MONTREAL

most important work is contained in the first.

Such a bedfast prisoner as Lozeau might be forgiven some morbidity, some inclination towards pessimism, some tendency to dwell mournfully upon his own limitations; but such is not the spirit of the poet. Even in his cell the world of books is open to him, and nature, and music. Though nailed to his couch, he is free to wander through each one; and Love the pilgrim comes his way, even if he be his guest but for a night. In a sick-room, the patient has two things to watch, the door and the window. At any moment there may be footsteps on the stair, and the door may open and show a friendly face. Thus the poet waits, expectant. His heart is an open door flung wide for the coming of the Beloved. He dreams of her graciousness, her faith, her purity, her tender care, her white, musician hands, the kisses of her mouth, the sweet, intimate silences when they shall be together. And at length she comes as he had dreamed. Love

CANADIAN LITERATURE

poetry is a rare product of the Canadian muse. Desire—the natural longing of a man for a maid—has seldom found its voice in these northern latitudes; but in lines like these is heard the authentic yearning note.

Vos yeux . . . Je baiseraï vos yeux sans
achever;
Fort d'un si grand amour, on ose tout braver.
Vos mains . . . Je presseraï vos mains
musiciennes,
Et vous ne pourrez pas les retirer des miennes.
Vos lèvres . . . À mon goût j'en boirai le bon
vin,
Et votre effort à les détourner sera vain.
Vous me privez souvent du doux plaisir que
j'aime:
Ah! vous me l'offrirez maintenant de vous-
même!
Tout ce que je voudrai, désormais je l'aurai.
Ce n'est pas moi toujours qui vous obéirai.
Vous souriez . . . Laissez, mon amour, que
j'achève:
Dites, que pouvez-vous faire contre mon rêve?

The light playful touch which is characteristic of Lozeau does not really detract from the earnestness of feeling. He seems to have little time for self pity, or regret for his lot. He can be almost caustic, or

IN MONTREAL

cynical on occasion, in the unexpected turn he gives to the main idea of a poem. In *Silence*, for example, he deplores the inadequacy of speech, and vaunts the superiority of the lover's unspoken language. He longs to do without words,

. . . infidèles, petits,
Qu'on désavoue, à peine aussitôt qu'ils sont
dits—
Comme ceux-là qu'ici, pour vous, je viens
d'écrire!

The suggestion of 'treason' in the poet's own avowal comes as a surprise.

This Gallic lightness, the old traditional French gaiety, crops out again and again. *Causerie Féminine* is an amusing little bit of social satire. Young girls are talking rather shrilly in the drawing-room,—of wonderful trinkets,—of other young people whom they criticise with scant charity. They compliment one another upon their clothes and plan new purchases. They confide secrets which the confidante repeats an hour later. They raise their voices; it sounds as if they were coming to blows.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

There must be fourteen or fifteen of them talking. . . . There are four! The poet can even bid sad-hued autumn welcome and draw cheer from a rainy October day. True, it is pouring, but it is pouring verses for poets with jostling golden rhymes. Poets need only to hold out their hearts,—*sursum corda!*—to catch them as they fall. In autumn, too, the poet knows how to waste a sullen day, as Milton proposed, with Attic feast and wine.

Pendant qu'il pleut, buvons, buvons le vin
joyeux,
Le vin magicien qui fait comme les dieux
Les jours gris rayonnants et les nuits tristes
belles!

The ballade of little poets has also the ring of mirth in it, while many of his out-o'-doors pieces pulsate with delight in the manifold shifting beauty of Nature's pageant.

Nature-worship is the 'note' of Canadian poetry, French as well as English. Poets of other nations find beauty, love, the soul their first concern; but our native

IN MONTREAL

bards seem to turn instinctively to the external world. Perhaps it is because the Canadian climate, with its fierce extremes of heat and cold, forces them to fix their eyes upon the procession of the seasons or because in their desire for beauty they find it first at their own door, not in the handiwork of man, but in the handiwork of God. The fact remains that, one and all, they sing the praise of Nature. The Mighty Mother is the theme of Lozeau, bed-ridden in a city room, no less than of Roberts, the untiring ranger of woods and streams. Like Roberts, he has made for himself a poet's calendar, which he calls *La Chanson des Mois*. His year begins with March, like the Christian year. The days are still wintry, but they are blue and sunny with the promise of spring in the air. The lovely weather draws the poet from his book and his devotion. He follows the course of the months round to winter again with keen enjoyment, as the epilogue, *Quand Même*, testifies.

Alors que le dernier chant vibre
D'un accent plaintif et moins libre,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Aux jours des automnes râleurs,
Mon cœur entonne un chant aux fleurs.

Lorsque siffle et brûle la bise,
Qu'il fait triste comme en église,
Aux jours des hivers assombris,
Quand même, sentant qu'il se grise
Mon cœur exulte, jusqu'aux cris!

That exultant heart is a priceless treasure.

The poet's calendar abounds in fine observation and just feeling. It could have been written only by a Canadian, of the Canadian year. Naturally, there is a great deal of snow in it, for the northern winter is not easily ignored. The lines on the behavior of a snowflake, on girls snow-shoeing, on the snow melting from the eaves appeal directly to Canadian experience. One mark of the native-born Canadian is his equal delight in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Lampman has sung both themes, and here Lozeau celebrates the prodigality of June, the ardors of the *Bel Eté*, and also the frost upon the pane and the whirling flurry and fall of the snow. Lampman and Lozeau resemble each

IN MONTREAL

other also in their natural refinement, a refinement with an edge.

Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art, runs Landor's poetic summation of his life. The art that appeals most strongly to Lozeau is music. He has hardly an image from painting, or sculpture, or architecture, but one entire section of *L'Ame Solitaire* is devoted to poems on music. That he has written eloquently on both love and music is the distinction of Lozeau. He longs, as an artist, for the musician's power of expression, which is not fettered by the sad limitations of words. He thrills in response to all varieties of music.

Langue d'argent vieilli des anciennes chansons;
Langue de bronze et d'or; carillon de baptême;
Langue d'airain par qui la révolte blasphème,
Te Deum, Marseillaise. . . .

Music intoxicates him like wine, and brings heaven into his very marrow. He seems more responsive to instruments of music, the harp, the mandolin, the guitar, the piano, than to the human voice.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Above all, he praises the '*belles mains musiciennes*,' the '*mains savantes*,' which can evoke the spells of the keyboard. He can write of the Italian and his street piano in a vein of gay humor, so catholic is his love of music.

The final section of *L'Ame Solitaire* is devoted to reflective poetry. There are references to Goethe, Hugo, Shakespeare, but the names that receive most attention are out of the beaten track—Ronsard, du Bellay, Villon, and Baudelaire. That a French-Canadian poet should have a good word for the author of *Fleurs du Mal*, shows how the world has moved, even in the province of Quebec. He understands the thesis of materialism, as in *La Voix Brutale*, and the demands of the soul, as in *La Voile*. If his final view has a shade of pessimism and seems to contradict his songs of courage and delight, he has plenty of good company, from Solomon to Swinburne, to reinforce his counsel

N'espère rien de bon de la vie: elle est vaine!

IN MONTREAL

Perhaps the poem, *Inconséquence*, expresses as well as any his simple philosophy of life. A rough English version may give the course of thought, if not the felicity of phrase.

Why were eyes given except to weep with care?
And hearts except to love, until they ache?
Flesh but to bleed and rot? Childhood to
take

The pains of age? And hope to breed despair?

And most of all, wherefore the Lie of Dreams,
When in the Prison of the Real we groan,
But, after years dream-ridden, this
alone,—

To learn how vain the Vision also seems?

What seems Good, tried, betrays us evermore.

Illusion smiles,—whereby we agonise.

If we mount up, the Abyss beneath us
lies,

Which flight for ever deepens as we soar.

And we fall ever, as a drunkard falls,

Despairing aye, but proud to rise again:

For we *do* rise, and till the end we gain,

We curse our life, rejoiced that life enthrals.

Lozeau's second volume, *Le Miroir des Jours*, appeared in 1912. It has all the qualities of the first, playful humor, love of nature and of music. It contains, like the first, poems to a woman

CANADIAN LITERATURE

and reflective poems. While it perhaps maintains the general level of the earlier work, it certainly does not surpass it. The first volumes of Canadian poets are apt to be their best.

What makes Lozeau's work significant is that his culture is exclusively Canadian. He has submitted to no alien influences. He has not travelled, even in his own country. He has escaped the deadening effects of ordinary school and college training. His long illness has forced him back upon himself, has driven his thoughts inward and has given him leisure for meditation. Books, music, friends,—universal implements of culture,—are to be found everywhere. The face of Nature is not hidden even in the brick and mortar wilderness of the modern city. Her child, the poet, may catch glimpses of her loveliness,—cloud, and star, and moon, and sky, and sun,—through his narrow loophole of retreat. As Stevenson says beautifully,

To make this earth, our heritage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,

IN MONTREAL

God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

These aspects of the Mighty Mother have had no slight or trivial influence upon Lozeau. The great Church which claims him as her son has given him a central point for his universe. Together, they have aided in making him what he is, the gentle dreamer of pure and tender dreams.

A foreign critic ventures on prophecy and declares that some day Lozeau's talent, which is already full grown, will compel the applause of all who love poetry.

The School of Literature rested from its labors, but French letters were still cultivated in Montreal. Volumes of verse still appeared from time to time, all more or less 'modern' in tone and tendency, and therefore to be classified as belonging to this fourth literary movement. Prose fiction and the drama were not produced; the favorite form was poetry. Much was meritorious; and some distinguished or refined in thought

CANADIAN LITERATURE

or expression; but there was no work strikingly different from the general run. In 1911, however, there appeared in Paris a book by a young French Canadian, which differed widely from all that had gone before, *Le Paon d'Émail*, by Paul Morin.

The author was born in Montreal in 1889, and had benefited by an education of more than usual breadth and thoroughness. From Laval he received three degrees, in Arts, Science, and Law; and from the University of Paris the doctorate for a thesis on the sources of Longfellow's poetry, which required a knowledge of practically every language and literature in Europe. In addition, he had made the classic tour of Europe and had seen with his own eyes the sunburnt lands about the Mediterranean, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, and Algiers. Such an equipment of scholarship and experience is rare; among Canadian men of letters, it is, one may fairly say, unique. No Canadian writer had completed such a training at the age of twenty-two.

IN MONTREAL

In 1911 Morin produced his first book, *Le Paon d'Émail*; and every page bears evidence of scholarship, travel, and cultivated taste. The title indicates the deliberate selection of an artistic *motif* which runs through the whole volume. The peacock, Juno's bird, is found in the illuminations of the ancestral missal of the famous family de Noailles; and to the Countess de Noailles, for whose poetry he has a profound admiration, Morin has dedicated this first heir of his invention. In his poem on the St. Jerome of Antonello da Messina, he says that the beauty of the peacock has always fascinated him, as well it might; for he has a painter's eye, having inherited from his mother artistic tendencies, and having himself cultivated art with success; and he would perceive the decorative possibilities of the gorgeous creature with all the eyes of Argus in his plumes. The peacock brings light and color to many a page. He plunges his crested, serpent-like head into the rose-bushes, or parades before an il-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

luminated letter in an old missal, or marches across the lawns of the Villa d'Este in the October sunshine. Under the escort of the peacock, the poet sees himself gathering the heavy velvet Persian roses in Ispahan; and in the dying peacock of the Tuileries, he perceives, quite needlessly, the symbol of his own poetry rent by a monster of a critic. He notes the gardener's fancy of calling the carnation the royal peacock, and he devotes a poem to the daring of Cicero in offering his friend a dinner without a peacock.

Morin is, in fact, a *Parnassien*, of the school of Leconte de Lisle. One mark of that school is perfection of form and the other, its fondness for the exotic. In *Le Paon d'Émail*, the labor of the file has not been stinted: technical defects are absent; and although the unaccustomed reader is halted now and then by the rare and far-fet word, he has no feeling that content has been sacrificed to form. In subject matter, this volume, it is almost needless to repeat, offers a complete con-

IN MONTREAL

trast to the works of the Quebec school. Canada and the Church are not the sources of Morin's inspiration; nor does he fall under ab der Halden's playful condemnation of Canadian poets that they are fondest of describing what they have never seen. Morin has poems dedicated to his contemporaries, Lozeau and Delahaye; and, in his envoy, he promises in some future day to wed Canadian words to the rhythms of France, and to intertwine the maple leaves with the laurel; but, apart from these references, there is little to prove that these poems were not written by some young Parisian. Italy, Turkey, China, Japan, Belgium, Brittany, Persia, Spain, Greece,—in other words, the strange, the foreignly picturesque, not the scenery or legends of the St. Lawrence, have prompted him to write.

In contrast to Lozeau, the shut-in, and to Lampman, who was never out of Canada, Morin is the traveller; he has seen the world; and he was dowered with the rare temperament which really bene-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

fits by travel. Happy is the artist who sees the world in his impressionable youth. Therefore, Morin, with his keen eye for form and color, his familiarity with books, and his trained historic feeling, is happiest in his efforts to seize the spirit of places. His *Adieux à Venise* conjures up, with fresh, intimate touches, the sea Cybele to her countless lovers.

Voici la Dogana. La gondola fantasque
Émaille sur l'eau d'or une ombre de tarasque.

Simple! but the couplet calls up the palace where the doges ruled, and the single gondola floating before that wonderful façade, with its fantastic shadow in the golden tide. Equally atmospheric is the cry,

Coupoles de Ziem, palais du Titien,
O bleu mol et mourant du ciel vénitien!

And everyone who has known the tender skies of Venice will echo the lament.

D'autres que moi boiront votre air doré, moiré.
Je ne reverrai plus San Giorgio Maggiore. . . .

Et par ce long canal d'azur et de topaze
Faut-il quitter, ce soir, la Ville d'extase?

IN MONTREAL

Such verse does not lend itself to translation; the sense is too closely wedded to the words, their very form and sound; for Morin uses words as a jeweller uses precious stones in a gold setting. To displace, interchange, or to substitute is to mar. Like Nelligan's, his verse has to English ears a grateful sonority, which may be due to his Longfellow studies. The research for the exact word produces this pleasure for the reader.

One French verse form which is apt to please English readers is that employed by Lamartine in his famous poem, *Le Lac*. Its effect is almost the same as the quatrain of *A Dream of Fair Women*, with its truncated fourth line. It is used by Morin in his *Trianon*. The haunts of Marie Antoinette set the poet dreaming; he peoples Versailles with beautiful and tragic figures—Polignac, Lamballe, the hapless Dauphin, the Queen herself.

Mon cœur français et moi nous vîmes ce matin
Le plaisible hameau parfumé de fougère
Où Marie-Antoinette en paniers de satin
Rêva d'être bergère;

CANADIAN LITERATURE

He does not moralise: he simply pictures the tragedy of 'the Austrian's' downfall, allowing the reader to make his own reflections. He does not disguise the fact of the Queen's folly, but he ponders on the grief with which she uttered the word, Trianon, when she left for ever the temple where Love hid arrows in his quiver under the roses.

With some justice Morin has been criticised because his poems contain 'more color than ideas.' In a young poet, this is a pardonable fault, which may be left to time to cure. Verbal felicity and formal perfection going hand in hand with spontaneous delight in the external world—

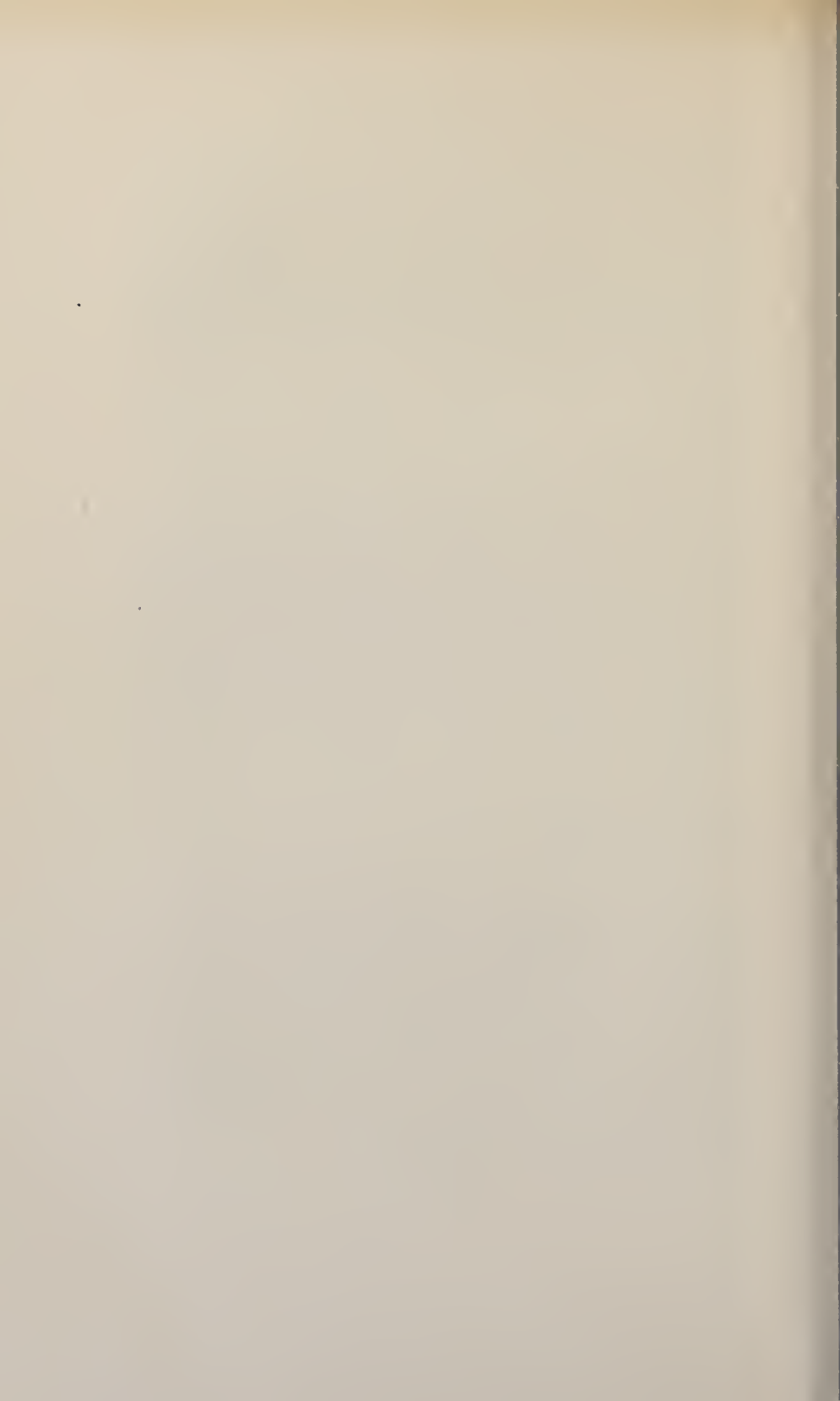
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and
shades,
Changes, surprises—

represent no slight achievement in a poet of twenty-two. Learned, travelled, eager to excel, seeing life with the artist's eye, endowed with true poetic power, Morin has written the best volume of

IN MONTREAL

French verse which can be credited to Canada. His second volume, *Poèmes de Cendre et d'Or* displays the same qualities of style as the first; but it does not possess the same artistic unity. To this volume the government of Quebec adjudged a prize of \$2,000 in 1923. Whether Morin will advance in power of thought, while retaining his love of beauty, cannot be predicted; but he has already done enough to give him a secure place in the literature of Canada and warrant high hopes for his future.

The fourth literary movement is curiously remote from national and historical influence. Its members are of Canadian birth and training; but they owe very little to the land of their birth. They might have cultivated French poetry, one feels, almost as well at Cayenne or Nouméa. Their 'note' is attention to artistic form; they are more learned and more critical than the Quebec school; and their success is undoubtedly greater. The poetry of Nelligan, Lozeau, and Morin is a greater glory to Montreal than her fifty millionaires.



5. East and West



CHAPTER V

EAST AND WEST



ETWEEN the end of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the Great War, Canada knew for the second time in her history a period of undoubted prosperity. Canadians who had been accustomed, all their lives, to think of Canada as a poor country had to readjust their thinking to fit the concept of Canada as a rich country. During the long lean years, there was a constant emigration of young men from the Dominion to the United States at the beckoning of opportunity, and the men of letters joined the stream of exiles. It was a commonplace that no literary man could hope for a career in Canada; there was no market for his wares; and a Canadian novelist, one of the expatriated, has recorded his opinion that his countrymen cared more for whiskey than

CANADIAN LITERATURE

for literature, as they spent far more money on drink than on books. The same might be said of every other country in the world, but the gibe rankled. The time was coming when the reproach should lose something of its sting. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the fifth literary movement in Canada, is that Canadian writers shared in the general prosperity. They were no longer compelled to exile themselves in Boston or New York; they remained at home, and were still able to market their wares outside of Canada to great advantage. For the first time, Canada saw the works of Canadian authors selling by the hundred thousand copies; and the swollen cheques for royalties impressed the popular imagination. It was no longer necessary for a poor writer to pay a Barabbas of a publisher for the privilege of seeing his immortal work in print. The rising tide of national prosperity was lapping on the attic stairs of Grub Street. The fifth literary movement is the era of 'best sellers.'

EAST AND WEST

The second feature of this period is the absence of any fixed literary centre. In all the other movements, groups of writers are found working with more or less cohesion in a city, Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa. Now the movement was as wide as the continent; it knew no east and no west. A girl in a quiet hamlet in Prince Edward Island, a parson in Winnipeg, a bank clerk in Vancouver could produce a child's story, a religious novel, or a book of verse, and thereby win immediate popularity, at home and abroad. The national impulse which began with the birth of the Dominion, and which was so strongly fecund and operative in Ontario has been felt from ocean to ocean. In spite of the chasm of the French-speaking province, it has reached out to the old colonies on the Atlantic seaboard; and, in spite of the clash of agrarian with manufacturing interests, it has taken possession of the prairie hinterland and crossed the barrier mountains to the Pacific. Throughout the country, Quebec always excepted,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

there is a certain sameness in thought and feeling, the basis, think some, of nationhood.

A third mark of this fifth movement was the production of prose fiction. The novel was everywhere the favorite form of expression all through the nineteenth century, and kept its place in the first decades of the twentieth against the competition of the new drama. Canada lagged behind, not only the United States and the rest of the world, in producing the novel, but behind her sister Dominions overseas. No story had been written so distinctly Canadian, as *Robbery Under Arms* is distinctly Australian, and no story 'made in Canada' attained the fame of *The Story of an African Farm*. For two generations, historians of Canadian literature were sore pressed to fill the department of nativist fiction. *The Golden Dog* was almost the single entry under this rubric, or else recourse was had to the historical romances of Major Richardson. Now there was an effort to depict life not in the past but in the pres-

EAST AND WEST

ent, especially as it manifested itself in the newer parts of Canada. Along with this cultivation of the prose fiction, there was a corresponding decline in the production of verse; for a successful novelist can live by his trade, while a poet is like Virtue and receives the wages of going on. If there was no falling off in the actual quantity of verse written, the quality suffered, with one brilliant and delightful exception to be noted later. A very great change had taken place since Lampman. The tender idealism of the eighties seemed to have fled from earth, and the most popular versifier of this period built his reputation upon brutality of theme and violence of language. None the less the spectacle of so many men and women working according to their divers gifts at the profession of letters throughout the land and attaining the success they desired was one to cheer the considerate patriot. Canadians in greater numbers than ever before were devoting themselves to the art of arts. The young Dominion was finding its

CANADIAN LITERATURE

voice; and the old reproach, 'the least literary of the colonies,' could no longer be justly flung at it.

The growth of historic consciousness and the production of historical works have already been remarked as notable features of all literary movements in Canada but one. In Halifax, in Quebec, in Ontario, they accompanied and reinforced the creative impulse. Far from losing its force by diffusion, the historic consciousness of Canada intensified and kept pace with the material expansion of the country. Evidence on this point is overwhelming. First comes the series of political biographies known as *The Makers of Canada*. The series was patriotically conceived, even if the individual works are of unequal value. Some are critical in method, original in use of materials, and well, even admirably written; such as Shortt's *Sydenham*, Le Sueur's *Frontenac*, Miss McIlwraith's *Haldimand*, and D. C. Scott's *Simcoe*. In format, paper, print, illustrations, and binding, the note of luxury was

EAST AND WEST

struck, and the authors were paid a living wage; but the Canadian public was ready and willing to meet the total cost. Large as this scheme was, it was to be outdone by one still more grandiose and even better executed. This was nothing less than a cooperative history of the whole country upon the familiar principle of assigning to a different specialist the part of the subject with which he was most competent to deal. Under the able leadership of Professor Shortt, and Dr. Arthur Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, a corps of a hundred associated writers was formed, which in five years produced the truly monumental work known as *Canada and its Provinces*. It ran to twenty-two 'sumptuous' volumes and the set cost nearly four hundred dollars; but the market absorbed it at once. Every department of our history, every form of national activity has been treated in detail. It is not only a history, but an encyclopedia of Canada, an indispensable storehouse of informa-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

tion regarding the country. How it is to be superseded, or how Canadian history is to be written along other lines, is difficult to understand. It was planned by Canadians; it was written by, and for, Canadians; it was made possible by the enthusiasm and acumen of a Canadian publisher; and it will long remain a conspicuous monument of Canadian pride in Canada. Running side by side with this huge publication was a series of popular little histories known as *Chronicles of Canada*, in thirty-two volumes. It was a charming series in all externals; it emphasised the picturesque in our history, and it appealed first to the intelligent young Canadian in his teens. It was even a greater success than the parent enterprise. A striking feature was the spirited frontispieces in color by the Canadian artist C. W. Jefferys, while the rest of the illustrative material—maps, plans, portraits—though not lavish, was carefully selected and always an aid to the understanding. Throughout, the quality of the writing

EAST AND WEST

is on a high level, the various authors apparently taking up the task of making books for the young with a certain youthful freshness and vigor. All based their work on special studies; and all had served their apprenticeship to the craft of letters. Leacock and Colonel William Wood are the largest contributors to the series, and their monographs are not surpassed in every essential of good story-telling.

Equally significant is the existence of the Champlain Society. It was a limited club founded for the purpose of reprinting for members rare and valuable documents relating to the history of Canada. Originating in Toronto, it holds out the hand of friendship to the French province. The society is named from the founder of Quebec and the first books to be printed are the works of French explorers and historians. Sixteen volumes have appeared which are, in all externals, triumphs of the book-maker's art. They have been edited with Benedictine care. Notable among these schol-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

arly works are the editions of Le Clercq and Denys by Professor Ganong, an expatriated New Brunswicker, who brought to his task a most minute knowledge of the topography of his native province. Another scholarly publication of a most comprehensive character is the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, founded by Professor G. M. Wrong and published by the University of Toronto. The title explains the scope of this review. From the first, it was noted for its high standard of excellence and for the fearlessness of its criticism. It constitutes an annotated bibliography of Canadian history, which must be indispensable to the specialist in that subject. While losing nothing of its breadth of scope, it has been turned into a regular quarterly review.

All these belong to the literature of knowledge; but they all owe their existence to the strong sense of nationhood, which is felt first by the keenest minds, by the intellectual leaders, the makers of opinion and by them communicated to

EAST AND WEST

the mass. It is also noteworthy that they all have their origin in the centre, and that they reach out east and west to the farthest bounds of the Dominion. They are all national, not provincial in their scope and plan. Many other histories and biographies must, of necessity, be passed over without even reference in so slight a sketch as this; but the total mass of current historical writing augurs well for the growth of the nation in true patriotism. A people that is unmindful of its past can have no future.

Not only the development of historic feeling, but the development of journalism has accompanied and reinforced the impulse to creative literature in Canada. Sam Slick, the typical 'smart Yankee,' made his first appearance in a contribution to a provincial newspaper. Journalism is the humble Cinderella^{the} sister to Literature, and, though often unacknowledged by her proud elder, most friendly and helpful. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the old personal jour-

*X Marrie
"The Growth of Literat"*

CANADIAN LITERATURE

nalism in the larger centres has passed away and given place to the journalism of the joint-stock company and the capitalist. The management was learning to pay for contributions, not generously, but still enough to enforce the truth that what costs nothing is commonly worth nothing. It was now possible for a number of Canadian writers to make a modest addition to their incomes by occasional contributions to the press. The *causerie* has not been developed in Canada except in French journals, but almost every important newspaper has its 'magazine features,' and its department of literary criticism. Of this last the most noteworthy examples were the 'Notes and Queries' page conducted by George Murray in the *Star*, and 'At Doddsley's' conducted by Dr. Martin Griffin in the *Gazette*. The growing wealth of the country was enabling newspaper proprietors to employ qualified and scholarly contributors.

The book review and 'literary page' was a concession of the frankly com-

EAST AND WEST

mercial newspaper to the educated portion of the democracy. It was only fitting that the professed nurseries of the mind, the universities, should do their share in fostering the intellectual life of the country through the higher journalism. Nor have they come short of such a lawful expectation. A group of Queen's men founded in 1892 the able review known as *Queen's Quarterly*. It has contained many articles of merit, and it is distinguished for its incisive and well informed criticism of foreign and domestic politics. Unfortunately it is not endowed, and does not pay for contributions. Its constituency is therefore limited, and also its usefulness. A labor of love, and an intellectual beacon, it is a striking proof of the strong independence of spirit and the local patriotism which have always characterised Queen's University. A more ambitious journal, established decisively not on the voluntary principle, but on the truth that the laborer is worthy of his hire, was *The University Magazine*, which

CANADIAN LITERATURE

first saw the light in 1907. It really was the child of McGill, but Toronto and Dalhousie stood sponsor. That was a red-letter day in the literary annals of Canada, when Andrew Macphail, physician, essayist, professor, and amateur farmer, declared before the Canadian Society of Authors, at their session in Toronto, 'I would not have anything to do with a magazine that depended on charity. If a magazine cannot pay its contributors, it is simply prolonging a useless existence.' Upon this impregnable rock, the new Canadian quarterly review was founded. At once it took its place among the very best of its kind. Macphail proved himself a heaven-sent editor. Thanks to his native courtesy and tact, to his unstinted, unpaid labors, and, in no small measure, to his own articles in it, the *University* became at once a power in the life of the country. His revolutionary policy of paying a living wage enabled the editor to rally the best brains of the country to its support, and also, what was even more im-

EAST AND WEST

portant, to pick and choose, to accept and to reject, without fear or favor. Its chief preoccupation was Canadian and Imperial politics, but it offered an open forum for the discussion of all problems in literature, art, philosophy. The encouragement it gave to Canadian writers was most grateful; it revealed unexpected strength; and it had the honor of introducing Miss Pickthall's poetry to an audience fit to appreciate it. It was a distinct commercial success, ran a brilliant course until Macphail went to the Great War as captain in No. 6 Field Ambulance, and finally ceased publication in April 1920. The only critical journal comparable to it in power was *The Week*; but its strength was a single extraordinarily keen and well-furnished mind. The strength of the *University Magazine* was in its corps of writers recruited all over Canada. *The Week* was undoubtedly able in its criticism of Canadian affairs, but it was unsympathetic, and soon drew the fire of so typical a Canadian as Grant of Queen's. The

CANADIAN LITERATURE

criticism of the *University Magazine* managed to be quite as searching, but without offence. Its successful career supplies one more index of the growth of national sentiment in sanity and strength.

The Canadian novel was tardy in its development. Not till about the end of the nineteenth century did this most popular form of writing come to its own in Canada; and once more journalism proved to be a most useful handmaid to literature. In 1897 *The Westminster*, a monthly magazine directed by a board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, published as a serial, a story, *Black Rock*. When this tale appeared in book form, it was received enthusiastically not only in Canada but throughout the United States. The author was the Rev. C. W. Gordon, who adopted in a rather haphazard fashion the *nom de guerre* of 'Ralph Connor,' Gordon is a thoroughly Canadian product. Having passed through the regular mill of Ontario government schools, he took his degree

EAST AND WEST

in Arts at the University of Toronto, and, in Divinity, at Knox College. After theological courses in Edinburgh and some travel on the Continent, he returned to Canada to work in the mission fields of the Northwest, before the coming of the land-sharks and the fabulous prices of townlots. He saw the raw, hard life of the frontier from the missionary's point of view. It was a wonderful chance to gather material and Gordon used it to the best of his ability; but the literary artist in him was always overshadowed by the earnest preacher of the gospel.

Black Rock is a tale of the unending struggle between the powers of light and darkness. Into a typical mining town in the Canadian Selkirks comes Craig, a typical Canadian missionary of the eighties, like Angus McLeod or Donald Martin, virile, earnest, fearless. He sets himself to reclaim the miners from drink, gambling and debauchery; and after various fortunes of war, he wins the victory. It would not be fair to describe such a

CANADIAN LITERATURE

book as a sugar-coated tract. The work is too sincere; and concessions are made to ordinary human nature by admitting descriptions of fights, horse-races, and by a certain moderate vein of humor, which reveals itself in imitation of French-Canadian and Scottish dialects, tolerant amusement at religious vagaries, etc. It succeeds also in a measure in conveying the atmosphere of the prairie and the mountains. *The Sky Pilot* is built on much the same lines. In this the forces of evil are a company of aristocratic ranchers, Englishmen of good family who meet periodically for a good time. Moore, the missionary, takes the part of Craig, but he dies in the hour of victory when the church at Swan Creek is opened. *The Man From Glengarry* and *Glengarry Schooldays* deal with conditions in the lumbering regions of Ontario about the middle of the last century. Doubtless there is much personal reminiscence in them. *The Prospector* is also a tale of missionary life in the West and lifts the veil from the hardships endured

EAST AND WEST

by pioneers. In *The Doctor*, Gordon introduces that admirable church statesman, Robertson, the Superintendent, whose biography he wrote later. One realistic chapter betrays his artistic limitations. His latest work, *The Foreigner*, opens up the problem of miscellaneous European immigration into Canada. The problem is sufficiently serious, and cannot be too carefully studied by all patriots.

Gordon's popularity is very pronounced. A Canadian lecturing on Canadian literature in San Francisco was interrupted by a burst of cheering at the mere mention of 'Ralph Connor's name. A Dalhousie professor kept a record of what his freshmen had read before entering college for several years, and found that practically every one was acquainted with Gordon's work. The English publishers of *Corporal Cameron* announced the first printing of 200,000 volumes. The fortunate author has made his fortune by his books; probably the first Canadian to do so. This wide-spread

CANADIAN LITERATURE

popularity admits of certain conclusions. All Gordon's novels are novels with a purpose, and that purpose is ethical and religious: the mass of mankind, not the critical remnant, still retains a lively interest in ethics and religion, and will always read a story which treats ethical and religious problems. The mass of readers holds firmly by the great Decency Principle and ranks itself decisively on the side of the angels. Gordon's success in his native country is explained by the fact that Canada is the last refuge of the Puritan spirit. A Scottish visitor in the Canadian West has recorded her surprise that young men attended church without any visible compulsion. To the eternal honor of the Canadian churches, they made a gallant effort to follow the settlers into the wilderness and provide them with the ordinances of religion. There was no lapsed Canadian West. Gordon is the historian of that movement for his own church, and his novels contain the record. That is their chief significance. With his native modesty and

EAST AND WEST

with the standards of literary excellence furnished by his university training, he would be the last to claim for his facile fiction any greater permanent value.

Gordon produced his novels at the geographical centre of the country, in his leisure from his ministerial duties. Miss Lucy M. Montgomery achieved her success from the far east, while pursuing her work as a school-teacher in the quiet hamlet of Cavendish in Prince Edward Island. Her education had been practically all received in her native province, except for a year at Dalhousie College, where she is gratefully remembered for a clever article on the education of women contributed to a 'Dalhousie number' of a local paper. In *Anne of the Island* she has described Halifax with affection under the name of Kingsport. Unlike Gordon, who had to be goaded into composition, Miss Montgomery had strong literary ambitions, and worked long and hard with little or no recognition before she was rewarded with an immense popular success. This was *Anne of Green*

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Gables (1908). More than three hundred thousand copies were sold within eight years. Mark Twain wrote to a friend: 'In Anne Shirley you will find the dearest and most moving and delightful child of fiction since the immortal Alice.' The heroine so praised is a little waif adopted by a childless couple in 'The Island.' Unlike the central figure of the usual child's story, she is not pathetic, or misunderstood, or neglected; nor does she immediately blossom into a genius, with love affairs. She is a good-natured, affectionate, garrulous, imaginative tomboy, who, with the best will in the world, is always getting into innocent scrapes, and ruing the consequences. One striking physical feature is her red hair, an unappreciated beauty, indeed a source of mortification, which aroused the sympathy of 'every red-haired girl in the world.' Anne would be at home in the household of *Little Women*; Jo March would have understood and appreciated her; but the mention of that classic is rather dangerous.

EAST AND WEST

The Canadian book just misses the kind of success which convinces the critic while it captivates the unreflecting general reader. The story is pervaded with a sense of reality; the pitfalls of the sentimental are deftly avoided; Anne and her friends are healthy human beings; their pranks are engaging; but the 'little more' in truth of representation, or deftness of touch, is lacking; and that makes the difference between a clever book and a masterpiece. Mr. Clemens' superlatives express the popular verdict. Canadian authors are in the habit of looking across the border for appreciation. They value American approval because home-grown critics are either cold, or so uniform and indiscriminating in their praise that it loses all savor.

Anne of Avonlea (1909) is a sequel to *Anne of Green Gables*, with the usual qualities of sequels. An author naturally desires to repeat a success as soon as possible; and the public created by one pleasing book just as naturally prefers a repetition of the same ideas and sensations

CANADIAN LITERATURE

to the fatigue of having to readjust its mental machinery to new requirements. The author's name becomes a trade-mark, guaranteeing uniform quality in the ware supplied. Miss Montgomery has created her public and she supplies it with what it wants. The conclusion to be drawn from Miss Montgomery's achievement is that the great reading public on this continent and in the British Isles has a great tenderness for children, for decent, and amusing stories, and a great indifference towards the rulings of the critics. Besides, *Anne of Green Gables* and its fellows meet more nearly the common and reasonable requirement of 'being true to life' than the Canadian stories of either Gordon or Parker.

A special significance of Gordon's fiction and of Miss Montgomery's is their Scottish atmosphere. Both writers are of Scottish descent. Gordon is a minister, and Miss Montgomery married a minister. In all they write the influence of the minister is either actual or implied. This means that Scottish religious

EAST AND WEST

and social ideals have been brought to this country by the immigrants from Scotland; and they have had no small or trivial influence in the up-building of the new country.

The other Canadian novelists of the fifth movement are difficult to classify and to characterise. Some are Canadian by birth and training, but they are expatriates, and find both inspiration and marketable themes in the busier and more various life of the American republic, rather than at home. The Rev. William King, who writes under the doublet name of 'Basil King' is a native of Prince Edward Island, a graduate of King's College, Windsor, and he was, for several years, rector of St. Luke's Cathedral at Halifax. After going to a charge in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he married an American lady; and his very successful stories deal exclusively with American problems and types. Arthur J. Stringer and Norman Duncan are also birthright Canadians who made their home in the United States and treated non-Canadian

CANADIAN LITERATURE

themes in their books. That Canada has a right to claim them as her own is more than doubtful. The same criticism must apply to Miss Lily Dougall, who had long resided in England, to Storer Clouston, and to W. Albert Hickman, author of a Pictou county story, *The Sacrifice of the Shannon*. E. W. Thomson and J. Macdonald Oxley have written many acceptable stories for boys and deal with recognisable Canadian life. The Rev. Robert Knowles, a Presbyterian minister of Galt, Ontario, had a certain success with novels of the 'Ralph Connor' school—Canadian stories with a purpose. Among the prominent women writers must be mentioned Miss Marshall Saunders and Miss Alice Jones, both Haligonians. Miss Saunders' animal story *Beautiful Joe* belongs to the same class as *Black Beauty*. Its aim is to win sympathy for our four-footed friends. This book has also sold by hundreds of thousands of copies. Miss Jones, the daughter of the late lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, has written

EAST AND WEST

five stories, two under pseudonyms, which touch the life and legends of her native province. *Gabriel Praed's Castle* is considered her strongest work.

Regarded as a whole, Canadian fiction is tame. It bears everywhere the stamp of the amateur. Nowhere can be traced that fiery conviction which alone brings forth a masterpiece. Modern problems are as yet untouched, unapproached. Direct, honest realism is also sadly to seek, though subjects are crying aloud for treatment on every side. If the truth were told about life in the west as Miss Sarah Macnaughten told it, or about Canadian farms, or about French Canada, the world would be astonished and enlightened. So far Canadian fiction is conventional, decent, unambitious, *bourgeois*. It has nowhere risen to the heights or plumbed the depths of life in Canada.

In a young country, it is only natural that imaginative writing should take precedence over reflective. The essay is almost a virgin field, and the Canadian essayists can be counted on the fingers

CANADIAN LITERATURE

of one hand. Amongst his other manifold activities, Dr. Andrew Macphail has produced three remarkable volumes, *Essays In Puritanism* (1905), and *Essays In Politics* (1909) and *Essays In Fallacy* (1910). The *Essays In Puritanism* are penetrating studies of Jonathan Edwards, John Winthrop, Margaret Fuller, Walt Whitman, and John Wesley. A literary and artistic circle in Montreal was so fortunate as to hear these subtle and brilliant essays by word of mouth. *Essays In Politics* consists of reprinted articles from *The University Magazine* chiefly treating the relations between Canada and Great Britain. The *Essays In Fallacy* deal with the American woman, the suffragette, and various holes in the coats of the teacher and the divine. These volumes stand alone for originality of thought, and for strength and subtlety of style. Mr. W. H. Blake published in 1915 a collection of his articles which had appeared in *The University Magazine*, under the title *Brown Waters*. In them he reveals a happy blending of the

EAST AND WEST

tastes of the sportsman and the bookman. Perhaps the most valuable portions are the appreciations of what is best in French-Canadian character as seen in the remoter parts of Quebec. In his *Canadian Essays and Addresses* (1915) Sir William Peterson discusses various problems of the Empire and of McGill University. His arguments are distinguished by their lucidity. *The Life of a Little College* (1914), by Archibald MacMechan, is a collection of essays on literary themes ranging from Virgil to Herman Melville. The title essay is a eulogy of Dalhousie College, where the writer was Professor of English. His introductions to *Sartor Resartus* and *Heroes and Hero-worship* are more ambitious critical studies of Carlyle. Arnold Haultain was born in India, but was educated in Toronto. For many years he was secretary to Goldwin Smith, and acted as his literary executor. Besides the *Reminiscences*, or table-talk of the famous Oxford professor, Haultain has written a classic on the game of golf,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

the wittiest and at the same time the most practical book on the subject, *The Mystery of Golf*. Stephen Leacock is, like Haultain, English by birth, but educated in Canada. He holds the chair of Political Economy in McGill University; but his real function is contributing to the gaiety of nations and adding to the stock of harmless mirth. His *Literary Lapses* (1910) signalled him as a humorist of the American school; and, as a consequence, a satirist, shooting folly as it flies. His humorous works enjoy, and deserve, a wide reputation. His *Essays and Literary Studies* (1916) treat themes as diverse as the character of Charles II. and the genius of O. Henry. They are all brilliantly witty and refreshingly original; and some, like *The Devil and The Deep Sea*, bring the light of a clear intellect to bear on one of humanity's most mournful problems. Leacock's work grows stronger with age. This completes the list of Canadian essayists, a scant half-dozen. Short as the list is, it is still too long for the public

EAST AND WEST

patience. In Canada, essays are tolerated but not read.

Parallel to the great popular success of Gordon and Miss Montgomery in prose, is the popular success of Robert Service in verse. His first volume, *Songs of a Sourdough* (1907) ran through edition after edition, and it was reported that his first cheque for royalties amounted to five thousand dollars. The book was published in Canada by a Canadian publisher and was bought by the Canadian public. It reads like a fairy tale, a page from the *Arabian Nights*. Mr. Service is not a Canadian, but a Scot; and he found his material in the wild life of the Yukon, among the gamblers, the miners, the fancy women who swarm wherever gold is found. Bret Harte dealt with similar material in a way that should daunt competition, but apparently Mr. Service did not fear comparison with that master. His themes are instinct with the quality which the French call *brutalité*. The sordid, the gross, the bestial may sometimes be re-

CANADIAN LITERATURE

deemed by the touch of genius, which reveals the soul of goodness in things evil; but that Promethean touch is not in Mr. Service. In manner, he is frankly imitative of Kipling's barrack-room balladry; and imitation is an admission of inferiority. 'Sourdough' is Yukon slang for the provident 'old-timer,' who bakes his own bread while 'baching it,' and keeps some dough over from one baking to leaven the next. It is a convenient term for this wilfully violent kind of verse without the power to redeem the squalid themes it treats. *The Ballads of a Cheechako* is a second instalment of sourdoughs, while his novel *The Trail of '98* is simply sourdough prose. A man in convulsions is not strong (though six men cannot hold him). In the Great War, Mr. Service was as good as his name at the front, in a field ambulance, and his *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* are a distinct advance on his previous volumes. He has come into actual touch with the grimmest of realities; and, while his radical faults

EAST AND WEST

have not been cured, his rude lines drive home the truth that he has seen.

If the critic were to judge the taste of the Canadian public solely by the prairie fire success of the sourdough verse, he might rashly conclude that the tender idealism, the Keats-like love of beauty which distinguish the dawn of Canadian national poetry had fled from the land for ever. But he would have to correct his judgment by taking into account success of another kind. In the autumn of 1913, there appeared, through the good offices of Andrew Macphail, a slim little dove-colored volume of less than a hundred pages, called *The Drift of Pinions*, by Marjorie L. C. Pickthall. An impression of a thousand copies was absorbed almost at once by the discerning; and this must also be reckoned as a popular success. Though born in England, Miss Pickthall came to Canada as a child, was educated and spent her formative years in this country; but environment has exerted little influence upon the character of her verse. She lived in Toronto

CANADIAN LITERATURE

until after the death of her mother, when she returned to England; but Canada cannot be denied the honor of having given her a home and being the first to acclaim her authentic gift of song.

The common complaint of the critic was that Canadian poets proffered their music to the world before they had mastered their instrument. They were apt to produce involuntary discords; but here was a singer who from her first prelude was incapable of uttering a false note. Open her little book at random, and harmony comes forth. It may be a dulcet Swinburnian melody. The little fauns sing to Prosperine departing

Now the vintage feast is done, now the melons
glow,

Gold along the raftered thatch beneath a thread
of snow.

Dian's bugle bids the dawn sweep the upland
clear,

Where we snared the silken fawn, where we ran
the deer.

It may be a strain of Tennysonian blank
verse.

She rode beside the duke
In velvet, colored as a pansy is,

EAST AND WEST

And threaded round with gold. Her mantle
strained

On the warm wind behind her, golden too,
Gold as the spires of lilies, and her hair,
And her dark eyes were danced across with gold.

Or it may be the simple ballad metre enriched and sweetened.

Dark is the iris meadow,
Dark is the ivory tower,
And lightly the young moth's shadow
Sleeps on the passion flower.

Gone are the day's red roses,
So lovely and lost and few;
But the first star discloses
A silver bud in the blue.

Night and a flame in the embers
Where the seal of the years was set,—
When the almond-bough remembers
How shall my heart forget?

Besides these, she has her own musical variations upon well accepted themes. In the words of the bridegroom of Cana to the bride, passion speaks as in the more ethereal portions of *The Song of Songs*.

Hear how my harp on a single string
Murmurs of love.
Down in the fields the thrushes sing
And the lark is lost in the light above,

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Lost in the infinite glowing whole,
As I in thy soul,
As I in thy soul.

Love I am fain for thy glowing grace
As the pool for the star, as the rain for the rill.
Turn to me, trust to me, mirror me
As the star in the pool, as the cloud in the sea.
Love, I looked awhile in His face
And was still.

If technical perfection were all, *The Drift of Pinions* would stand alone in Canadian literature beside *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, but the verbal music is only the accompaniment of inner harmonies which these true poems release. Miss Pickthall is a singer of spiritual songs, a dreamer of such dreams as haunted St. Agnes. The title is significantly drawn from Francis Thompson's lines,

The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

Her consciousness of the unseen is the heart of all her poetry. Perhaps the most significant of all her poems is *St. Yves Poor*. It is a mediaeval theophany, the scene being laid in Brittany; the very name is mystical. The good almoner is

EAST AND WEST

distributing the accustomed dole of loaves and fishes among the poor, when a ragged unknown suppliant appears begging; and the saint leaves the last loaf in his palm that shows 'a red wound like a star.' The climax is capable of moving to tears by its intense but quiet beauty.

And I once more, My son I know thee not,
But the bleak wind blows bitter from the sea,
And even the gorse is perished. Rest thou here.
And he again, My rest is in thy heart.
I take from thee as I have given to thee.
Dost thou not know Me, Breton?

I,—My Lord!—

A scent of lilies on the cold sea-wind,
A thin white blaze of wings, a face of flame
Over the gateway, and the vision passed,
And there were only Matthieu and brown Bran,
And the young girl, the foam-white Jannedik,
Wondering to see their father rapt from them,
And Jeffik weeping o'er her withered hand.

Christina Rossetti and Blake would have felt their spiritual kinship with the author of this poem. Narrative is the exception. Her poems are essentially songs, the purest form of poetry, 'purest' meaning 'freest from admixture of anything else.' These lyrics are not of the earth; their element is air; they never touch the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

ground, but wheel like swallows in an enchanted crystal-clear ether of their own. For this poetess, the jar and fret of this present evil world, the tempest of human sorrow, the clamor of social war, the tumult of discontent, the roaring wheels of industry and commerce are as if they had never been. Apart and aloof from it all, she sits and weaves her spells, admitting within the magic circle of her verse nothing harsh, nothing ugly, nothing common or unclean. Creeds, opinions, philosophies which unite or divide men cast no shadow here. Most poetry is human sadness, human emotion and brooding charged with the sense of tears, but these fairy roundels are full of quiet joy, such as an innocent child might feel in a world that had never known sin.

Though *The Drift of Pinions* is not 'a contribution to Canadian literature,' Canada has brought her own subtle contribution to its making. Maple leaves are entwined in a song of the Nativity; choke-cherries and milk-weed are decor-

EAST AND WEST

ations borrowed from Canadian fields; the heart of Lalemant, the Jesuit martyr, is laid bare in one poignant soliloquy; and the cruelty of Charnisay in another. Such a lyric as *Frost Song* in an intimate interpretation of the norland winter, and fit tribute to Our Lady of the Snows—a little love by the blazing fire with the frost barricading the doors against all intruders.

Here where the bee slept and the orchid lifted
Her honeying pipes of pearl, her velvet lip,
Only the swart leaves of the oak lie drifted
In sombre fellowship.
Here where the flame-weed set the lands alight,
Lies the bleak upland, webbed and crowned
with white.

Build high the logs, O love, and in thine eyes
Let me believe the summer lingers late:
We shall not miss her passive pageantries,
We are not desolate,
When on the sill, across the window bars,
Kind winter flings her flowers and her stars.

It may not perhaps be mere fancy to suggest that clear Canadian skies and hopeful air may have had some influence on the serene tone of all Miss Pickthall's poetry.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Prose has also engaged her pen. Since returning to England, she has produced a novel, *Little Hearts* (1915) of much promise. The scene is laid in eighteenth-century England, the coarse, shallow, self-complacent world of Horace Walpole. But Miss Pickthall is incapable of representing that world as it really was. Over all she casts the opalescent mists of her own temperament, softening, irradiating, etherealising the harsh features of that prosaic time. Her novel has the same qualities as her poetry, a refined and flawless style, with its centre in the things of the spirit. *Little Hearts* is not a costume novel, nor a Stevensonian story of adventure. It deals with problems which cannot vary from age to age—love for a woman, friendship for a man, loyalty to a trust, speaking truth or living a lie—and it handles these problems with rare and delicate skill. In the technique of the story-teller's art, Miss Pickthall has little to learn; the characters are pastels, the narrative moves freely, suspense is well maintained, the climax is a complete sur-

EAST AND WEST

prise, deep and touching. A certain patrician distinction attends all Miss Pickthall's work. Her prose is gentle, unforced, clear, penetrating; sentence following sentence 'with the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace.' The patriotic critic is wistfully conscious that Canada has neither part nor lot in this achievement, and he wishes his country could lay claim to it.

Miss Pickthall could not remain in England after the war. She declared herself 'Canada sick,' and returned home, to produce, one more novel, *The Bridge*, and to die, untimely. In spite of excellent passages, *The Bridge* cannot be considered a successful novel. The Canadian setting seemed to make the tale unreal; and it is doubtful if she would have ever succeeded as a novelist. Her legacy to Canada is a tiny sheaf of true poems.



Epilogue



EPILOGUE

A survey of the various literary movements in what is now the Dominion of Canada reveals very interesting tendencies. From the first number of *The Nova Scotia Magazine* to *The Drift of Pinions*, a period of a century and a quarter, the tiny rill which had its source in Loyalist Halifax has broadened into a richly various stream of literary production as wide as the continent. From the first, history has played a large part. Provincial at the outset, the historical consciousness of Canada has more than kept pace with the material expansion of the country. Now it knows no east and no west. Its reaction upon the Quebec school of writers is most marked; but it only reached its growth after the difficult and hazardous experiment of national unity commonly known as Confederation. To no department of the literature of

CANADIAN LITERATURE

knowledge have Canadian writers made richer contributions than to the department of Canadian history. The very latest achievements are the most impressive and the most solid. In this tendency, which is far from spent, may be clearly seen a potent force working silently for national unity.

In the literature of power, Canada has repeated the history of all primitive peoples. Poetry has come first; prose is a late development. The only nativist prose fiction worth considering is that of the very latest period. Most of it shows the weakness of the amateur. The novelists do not speak for Canada as the poets do. Fréchette has voiced the aspirations of his province; Roberts, the aspirations of Canada. The absolute achievement of our true poets, Crémazie, Lampman, Carman, Morin, Pickthall, is far higher than the best work of our novelists. No prose work from a Canadian pen can be set beside *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, *Le Paon d'Email*, *The Drift of Pinions* for sheer imaginative power, harmony, and

EPILOGUE

beauty. The Canadian novel is yet to come. The period under review comes to the colophon with cheering signs for the future,—the finished artistry of Paul Morin, and the clear, penetrating appeal to the spirit, of Marjorie Pickthall.

> A third remarkable feature is the popularity of Canadian authors in their own country. Being interpreted, this phenomenon means that the Canadian public is interested in itself, and is able and willing to buy home-grown books. It also implies a rapid and wide-spread literary cultivation and genuine interest in the world of letters. A Canadian public has been formed which is ready to welcome the work of Canadians and is becoming more and more competent to judge that work. Canadian writers need no longer exile themselves abroad, or look first for a market south the border. Nor does a sweeping popular success mean that Canada cannot appreciate a pure and high idealism in literature. Though progress in literary production is largely illusory, for creative periods may be followed by

CANADIAN LITERATURE

dead wastes of commonplace, the outlook is full of hope.

There is one exception. The Canadian literature in the French tongue has many qualities of distinction; a regard for form, which is inseparable from French genius, strong historic feeling, and the capacity for genuine emotion. The difficulty which French-Canadian writers must always encounter is lack of that public appreciation which will make their exertions worth while. In other words, the lack of a market can hardly fail to discourage French-Canadian writers. Quebec is a speech-island in an English-speaking continent. Popular success is out of the question. A French Ralph Connor is hardly thinkable though there is the success of *Maria Chapdelaine* to be taken into account. The most that a Quebecquois novelist or poet can hope for is a *succès d'estime*, either at home, or in France. At the highest, he may hope to become a Canadian Hérédia. Another difficulty is the tendency manifested by the younger school to cut themselves off from

EPILOGUE

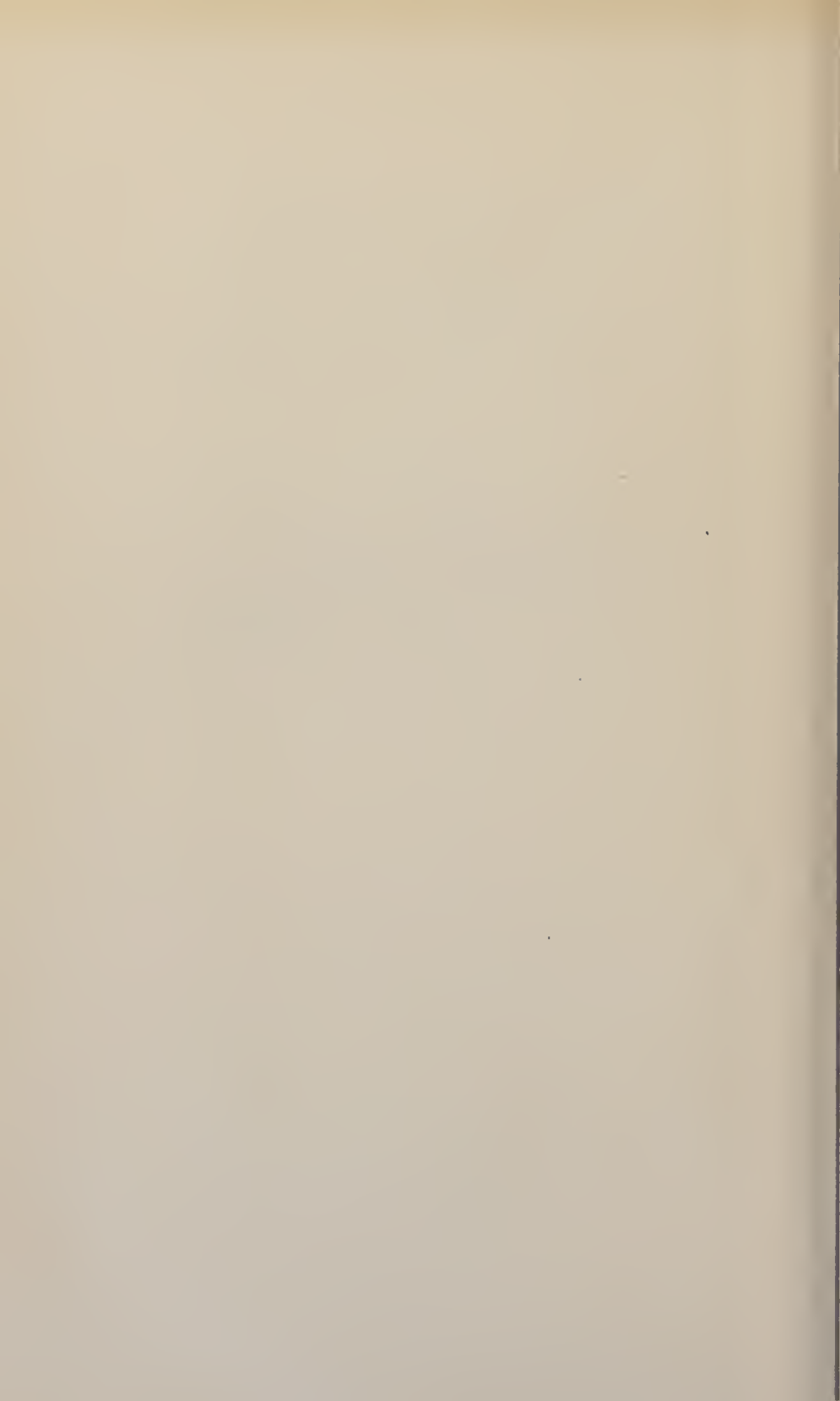
the springs of French-Canadian national life. There is gain in artistry and in cosmopolitan breadth, but also loss of touch with the creative, life-giving, native soil.

All critical judgments are sadly liable to error, and always subject to revision. The test which no critic can apply, the final test, is the test of time. The old fellow with the scythe and the hour-glass is the supreme judge of literary fame. From his decision there is no appeal. How much of the work produced in Canada during the last century is destined to live? How much will be read or remembered at the end of the twentieth century? The answer must be—very little. The bulk of it is ephemeral; it smells of mortality. If Tennyson heard sullen Lethe rolling doom on his great compositions, what should be the reflections of our poetlings regarding theirs? I venture to think that two French lyrics will endure,—Gérin-Lajoie's pathetic *Canadien Errant*, and Crémazie's noble *Drapeau de Carillon*,—at least as long as the

CANADIAN LITERATURE

French have hearts to sing. Humorous work has perhaps the best chances of living. The best pages of Haliburton, Sarah Jeanette Duncan, Drummond, and Leacock may be saved from the wreck. Fragments of the most quotable work of Lampman, Roberts, Carman, Pickthall, Fréchette, Morin will be salvaged into histories of literature, school-readers, and national anthologies along with McCrae's perfect rondeau. Over how much of the rest will oblivion scatter her poppy!

Index



INDEX

A

- Acadian Geology*, 32.
Acadian Magazine, The,
 23.
Acadian Recorder, The,
 32.
Adieux à Venise, 182.
 Aikins, Thomas Beamish,
 28.
American Baron, The, 47.
Among the Millet, 109.
Anciens Canadiens, Les,
 84.
Anne of Avonlea, 211.
Anne of Green Gables,
 209-10.
Anne of the Island, 209.
At Minas Basin, 35.
Attaché, The, 39.
Ave, 122, 124.

B

- Ballads of a Cheechako*,
 220.
Beautiful Joe, 214.
Behind the Veil, 49.
 Belcher, Admiral Sir
 Edward, 31.
Bel Été, 172.

- Bell, Andrew, 57.
 Bibaud, Michel, 54.
Black Rock, 204.
 Blake, W. H., 86, 216-17.
Book of High Romance,
The, 50.
Book of Roberts, The, 105.
B.O.W.C. series, 47.
Bridge, The, 229.
 Brown, Rev. Andrew, 27.
Brown Waters, 86, 216-17.
Bubbles of Canada, 43.
 Bullock, Rev. W., 35.

C

- Calnek-Savary History*, 29.
 Campbell, 28.
 Campbell, W. Wilfred,
 133-135.
Canada and Its Provinces,
 195.
Canadian Essays and
Addresses, 217.
Canadian Magazine, The,
 102, 106.
Canadian Monthly, The,
 102.
Canadian Review, The,
 102.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Canadien errant, un, 82, 237.
 Carman, Bliss, 35, 105, 126-133, 238.
 Casgrain, Abbé, 71.
Causerie Féminine, 169.
 Chapman, William, 72, 81.
Chief Factor, The, 141.
Chronicles of Canada, 196.
Clockmaker (The), or the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville, 37, 39.
 Clouston, Storer, 214.
Collect for Dominion Day, 119.
Collections (N.S. Historical Society), 29.
Coming of Winter, The, 117.
 'Connor, Ralph,' 204-209, 236.
Cord and Creese, 47.
Corporal Cameron, 207.
 Crémazie, Octave, 60-69, 237.
 Crowell, 29.

D

Dawson, Sir William, 32.
 de Gaspé, Philippe Aubert, 83.
 De Mille, James, 46-50.
Devil and the Deep Sea, The, 218.

Dieudonné, 92.
Doctor, The, 207.
Dodge Club, The, 47.
 Dougall, Lily, 214.
 Doughty, Dr. Arthur, 195.
Drapeau de Carillon, Le, 67, 237.
Drift of Pinions, The, 221, 224, 233, 234.
 Drummond, William Henry, 87-94, 238.
 Duncan, Norman, 213.
 Duncan, Sara Jeanette, 136-139, 238.
 Duport, John, 26.

E

Earth's Enigmas, 125.
Emile Nelligan et son œuvre, 155.
Essais Poétiques (Le May), 69.
Essays and Literary Studies, 218.
Essays in Fallacy, 216.
Essays in Politics, 216.
Essays in Puritanism, 216.
 Ewing, Mrs., 105.

F

Feast of Ste. Anne, 35.
 Fenerty, 30.
 Ferland, Abbé, 81.
Feuilles d'Erable, 81.

INDEX

Five O'clock, 164.
Fleurs Boréales, 75.
Fleurs du Mal, 174.
Foreigner, The, 207.
Frankincense and Myrrh,
 35.
Fréchette, Louis, 70, 72-
 81, 238.
French-Canadian, The, 86.
Frogs, The, 114.
From Ocean Unto Ocean,
 36.
Frontenac, 194.
Frost Song, 227.

G

Gabriel Praed's Castle, 215.
Ganong, Professor, 198.
Garneau, Francois Xavier,
 56-59.
Garvie, A. R., 35.
Gazette, The (Montreal),
 200.
Gerin-Lajoie, 82-83.
Gesner, Abraham, 32.
Glaneur, Le, 146.
Glengarry School Days,
 206.
Golden Dog, The, 135-
 136.
Goldsmith, Oliver, 24.
Gordon, Rev. Charles W.
 ('Ralph Connor'), 204-
 209.

Gouttelettes, 71.
*Grant, Principal (George
 Munro)*, 30, 31, 107.
Grant, W. L., 30.
Great Ermine, 78.
Griffin, Martin, 200.

H

Habitant, The, 88.
Haldimand, 194.
Haliburton, Thomas
Chandler, 27, 36-44, 238.
Halifax Gazette, The, 33.
*Halifax Monthly Mag-
 azine, The*, 25.
Hamilton, 35.
Hannay, 28.
Haultain, Arnold, 217.
Heat, 111.
Heaveysege, Charles, 101.
Helena's Household, 47.
Hémon, Louis, 86.
Herbin, J. F., 35.
Hickman, W. Albert, 214.
*Histoire Critique des Rois
 de France*, 79.
Histoire du Canada, 56.
*Historical and Statistical
 Account of Nova Scotia,
 An*, 40-43.
History of Canada, 125.
Howe, Joseph, 25, 44-46.
*Howe's Letters and
 Speeches*, 30.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

I

Imperialist, The, 138.
Inconséquence, 175.
Indian Summer, 134.
In Divers Tones, 119.

J

Jackanapes, 105.
Jean Rivard, 82.
 Jeffreys, C. W., 196.
Johnnie Courteau, 93.
 Jones, Alice, 214.
Journal of Alleyne, 31.

K

King, Rev. William
 ('Basil'), 213.
 Kirby, William, 135-136.
 Knowles, Rev. Robert, 214.

L

La Chanson des Mois, 171.
Lady of the Ice, The, 48.
Lake Lyrics, 133.
L'Amerique, 73.
L'Ame Solitaire, 166, 173-4.
 Lampman, Archibald, 106, 109-117, 238.
La Presse, 148.
La Voile, 174.
La Voix Brutale, 174.

La Voix d'un Exilé, 73.
 Lawson, Mrs., 35.
 Leacock, Stephen, 197, 218, 238.
L'Echo des Jeunes, 146.
 Le Clerq and Denys, 198.
Le Cloître Noir, 162.
Légende d'un Peuple, 70, 75-78, 153.
Le Lac, 183.
 Le May, Pamphile, 69.
Le Miroir des Jours, 166, 175-6.
Le Paon d'Émail, 178-184, 234.
 Le Sueur, 194.
Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure, The, 38.
Letters on Education, 79.
Letters to Lord John Russell, 46.
Lettres à Basile, 79.
Le Vaisseau d'Or, 158.
Life of a Little College, The, 217.
Life of 'Bishop' Black, 31.
Life of MacGregor, 30.
Life of Sir Brenton Halliburton, 30.
Literary Lapses, 218.
Little Ermine, 78.
Little Hearts, 228.
Low Tide on Grand Pré, 35, 127, 224, 233, 234.
 Lozeau, Albert, 164-177.

INDEX

M

MacGregor (of Dalhousie), 32.
 MacMechan, Archibald, 217.
 Macphail, Andrew, 202-3, 216.
Makers of Canada, The, 194.
Man from Glengarry, The, 206.
Maria Chapdelaine, 86, 236.
Marshlands, The, 35.
Marsyas, 118.
Martyr of the Catacombs, 47.
Matins, 105.
 Mavor, Professor, 102.
 McCrae, Col. John, 238.
 McCulloch (Principal), 38.
 McIlwraith, Jean N., 194.
Melville Island, 25.
Merlin, 78.
Mes Loisirs, 74.
Milles Isles, Les, 65.
Monition, A, 106.
Montcalm (play), 79.
 Montgomery, L. M., 209-213.
 Moodie, Susanna, 100.
 Morin, Paul, 178-185, 235, 238.

Murdock, Beamish, 28.
 Murray, George, 200.
 Murray, Rev. Robert, 36.
Mystery of Golf, The, 218.
My Windows on the Street of the World, 102.

N

Nelligan, Emile, 155-164.
New Dominion Monthly, The, 102.
New York Nocturnes, 124.
 Nicholson, Byron, 86.
Noël au Canada, 79.
Northern Vigil, A, 132.
Nova Scotia Archives, 29.
Nova Scotia Magazine, The, 20, 233.
Novascotian, The, 32.

O

Ocean to Ocean, 31.
Oiseaux de Neige, 75.
Old Judge, The: or, Life in a Colony, 44.
Open Question, An, 47.
Originaux and Détraqués, 78.
Orion and Other Poems, 104, 118.
 Oxley, J. Macdonald, 214.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

P

- Papineau* (play), 79.
Parables of a Province, 140.
 Parker, Gilbert, 140-142.
Pastels et porcelaines, 160.
Path of a Star, The, 138.
 Patterson, 29.
Pèlerinage au Pays d'Évangeline, 71, 81.
 Peterson, Sir William, 217.
Petite Chapelle, 163.
 Pickthall, Marjorie L. C., 221-229, 235, 238.
Picturesque Canada, 107.
Poèmes de Cendre et d'Or, 185.
Poems and Essays, (Howe), 44.
Pretty Pierre, 141.
Promenade de Trois Morts, 64.
Prospector, The, 206.

Q

- Quand Même*, 171.
Queen's Quarterly, 201.

R

- Rand, Rev. Silas.
Recollections of Nova Scotia, 36.
Reminiscences (Goldwin Smith), 104, 217.

- Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, 198.
Rhymes of a Red Cross Man, 220.
 Richey, 31.
Rising Village, The, 24.
 Roberts, Charles G. D., 34, 35, 104, 117-126, 238.
 Roberts, Lloyd, 105.
Roughing It in the Bush, 100.

S

- Sacrifice of the Shannon, The*, 214.
 Saul, 101.
 Saunders, Marshall, 214.
 Scott, D. C., 194.
 Service, Robert, 219.
 Sherman, Frank, 105.
 Shortt, 194.
Silence, 169.
 Simcoe, 194.
Simple Adventures of a Memsahib, The, 138.
Sister to Evangeline, A, 125.
Sky Pilot, The, 206.
 Smith, Goldwin, 102.
Social Departure, A, 137.
Soirées Canadiennes, Les, 61.
Soirées du Château de Ramezay, 152.

INDEX

Song of Songs, The, 223.
Songs of a Sourdough, 219.
Songs of the Common Day, 120.

Star, The (Montreal), 200.
Statutes at Large, 26.

Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder, A, 49.

Stringer, Arthur J., 213.

St. Yves Poor, 224.

Sydenham, 194.

T

Thistledown, 35.

Thomson, E. W., 214.

Those Delightful Americans, 137.

Trail of '98, The, 220.

Trianon, 183.

Tribune of Nova Scotia, The, 30.

Truth, The, 109, 116.

U

University Magazine, The, 201.

V

Veronica (play), 79, 152.

Voyage of H.M.S. Sulphur, 31.

W

Wayfaring, 131.

Week, The, 102.

We love the place, O God, 35.

Westminster, The, 204.

When Valmond Came to Pontiac, 141.

Williams, Michael, 50.

Winter Hues Recalled, 111.

Wood, Col. William, 197.

Wreck of the Julie Plante, The, 93.

Wrong, Professor G. M., 198.



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